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BOOK FOR
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Wake Up, England !

Being the amazing Story
of John Bull—Socialist.

By
EDWARD PRINCE.

485
This remarkable book, by an Author
who is sternly opposed to Socialism,
is published "for use—not for profit."

ST. STEPHEN'S PRESS,
ST. STEPHEN'S HOUSE, WESTMINSTER.

1910.

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Being the Amazing Story of
John Bull—Socialist

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CHAPTER I

THE Doctor was regarding with very grave anxiety the face of the little patient before him. "Nurse," he said, "is there no possibility of tracing the parents of this child? I have a strong suspicion he is of consumptive tendency, and I must know something of his antecedents. Why! the boy is nearly blind. Look! he can scarcely see my hand when it is held between him and the light. This is very sudden; he must go into hospital at once. Where is the mother? I suppose you took all particulars at the time of birth. Who was the father?"

"Well, comrade, we took all the particulars we could get. It is always a most difficult matter, and in this instance the mother would tell us nothing about the father. She just said that she had taken a dislike to him, and that the marriage had been dissolved "with the consent

John Bull : Socialist

of the community," by the "Civil representatives of the State."* This happened some months before the birth of the child."

"Well, where is the mother now?" said the Doctor. "I must see her, if possible. Perhaps she could tell me something of her own parentage."

"Ah, that I doubt, comrade. She told us she never saw either father or mother; she was brought up by the State. We found her very troublesome and restless; she was always wanting to get outside. She married again shortly after she left us, and some time later we heard she had been sent up north, at her own request, to one of the textile factories. Her last husband told us this. He had just had the marriage dissolved. He said they were 'absolutely incompatible in temperament,'† and he told us too, that she did not go up north alone."

"Well, well," said the Doctor impatiently, "it seems there is nothing to be done. It is a sad pity. If I could diagnose this case with

* The Woman Socialist, p. 61.

† The Woman Socialist, p. 62.

John Bull: Socialist

certainly, I believe I could cure the child, but it is absolutely necessary I should know something of his antecedents. However, we must do the best we can. What do you call this little man?"

"We call him John Bull, comrade; it's a fancy name. The mother's name is Jane English, and he is registered as John English; but the consulting physician, Comrade Dr. Henderson, gave him the name of John Bull. He said it made him think of old times."

"Ah! that reminds me. Where is Comrade Henderson now?"

"He is on the pension list now. You see, he is nearly seventy years old. He is living by the sea, in one of the State Pension Houses. Do you want to see him?"

"Yes, I must have a talk with him about this child. Before the Socialists came into power he was House Physician in one of the hospitals for consumption. I was only a student at the time, but I remember him well. He was most successful with one or two cases of eye-trouble, which defied diagnosis until he traced the heredity. I am inclined to think

John Bull : Socialist

that this is a similar case, but I must have a few more particulars, nurse. Let me see. The boy is now nearly six years old, and has been brought up in a Training Home. Was the mother fond of him? Did she never wish to have him? Was she able to nurse him?"

"Oh, yes! she was quite able to nurse the child, but she only did it for a short time. She was certainly not fond of him; she always seemed to be thinking of something else. She often had letters from someone outside, but she would never say who it was. I taxed her one day with not caring for the child, and reminded her that it was contrary to the wishes of the State."

"What did she say?" said the Doctor smiling.

" 'Oh, well,' she only said, 'what's the good, comrade? the little 'un don't belong to me—he belongs to the State. I ain't agoin' to care for the child, and lay up for meself a lot of mis'ry when he's took away. Not me!' That's what she said; so I just told her she ought not to be thinking of herself, but of the child, who

John Bull : Socialist

had to grow up strong and healthy, to be a worker in the State."

"I am afraid your arguments were not very convincing, nurse, seeing that she left the child," said the Doctor. "Do you often have this difficulty?"

"A great deal oftener than we used, comrade ; but what can we do? Comrade Jane English cared nothing for any of us. She just snapped her fingers at the officials, and at last became so restless and fractious that we felt the child was better without her, so let her go. She went back to work long before the usual time."

"*Ah*, so much for thirty years of Socialist rule," said the Doctor. "Now listen, nurse : I must, if possible, get a day off, and go down and see Dr. Henderson. He may want to see the child himself ; if so, I shall bring him up. I will get Comrade Dr. Helen Brown to look at the boy while I am away. Meanwhile, feed him well ; let him get as much air as possible, but on no account let him take cold. I am not without hope that we may save his sight yet, in spite of the difficulties before us."

John Bull: Socialist

"*Well, well,*" said the Doctor, under his breath as he left the room, "what a curse this rule is!"

Speeding along in the train to the little seaport town on the south coast, Comrade Dr. Bryce had much to think about. He rarely had any time to himself, as the Socialist rule of the short working day did not apply to doctors. It was found that it would not work. In serious cases, the doctor's attendance was required several times a day for the same patient; and although it had been urged by the Socialist Government that the same patient could be visited by different doctors, and that in some cases it would even be an advantage, it was found in the working out to present so many difficulties—difficulties fraught with so much danger to the patient—that the hospital officials had finally declared it to be impossible.

The State gave long and serious consideration to this check to Socialist Administration; but at last giving in on the grounds that "no man has a right to his self because he did not make that self,"* they proceeded to work the

* Merrie England, p. 75.

John Bull : Socialist

doctors according to the needs of the patients—
“To each according to his needs*” being one
of the watchwords of the Socialist State.

However, the Medical Faculty, well aware
of their importance in the community, called
a meeting of “Comrades in Council,” and
advised the State of their opinion as to the
“Rent of Ability.” It then remained with the
State to bring itself into line with the wishes of
the doctors, a proceeding which entailed the
usual Referendum. A Bill was framed, in-
dicating certain financial emoluments, and
providing that each doctor should have at least
one day in the month which he could call his
own. This was placed before the country, and
being well understood by the community, was
carried almost unanimously.

State Pension House No. 1, the destination
of Comrade Dr. Bryce, was a plain brick
building, with no attempt at architectural
beauty, as it had only recently been erected.
Developing Socialism had not so shaped itself
as to include superfluous expenditure in the

* From Serfdom to Socialism, p. 89.

John Bull : Socialist

matter of newly erected buildings. It had also found, under increasing pressure of financial economies, that there was no necessity for making the State Pension Houses attractive ; and although Socialist reasoning had declared that "A community which provides for its children will certainly not neglect the aged,"* and that such cases would be treated with every possible consideration," it had been left to juridical Socialism to discover that there was no analogy between the child and the aged, with the result that the lives of citizens, relegated to this last home, found little to hope for.

Comrade Dr. Bryce found his friend seated by the window, in one of the upper rooms of the State Pension House. He was looking pale and worn, but his face lighted up as he eagerly grasped the hand extended to him.

"This *is* a pleasure," he said ; "but what brings you here? I thought your holiday was at the end of the month."

"Ah, but you see," said the Doctor dryly, "my holiday is when I choose to take it."

* Woman : Past, Present, and Future, p. 224.

John Bull : Socialist

"Indeed!" said his friend smiling, "that was not the case when the Socialists first came into power, as I found to my cost."

"Yes, but we have changed all that," replied the Doctor. "Socialism has moved along since then. The officials do not now dictate to the doctors. Why! the doctor is the one free person under this enslaving administration. There is no citizen so important in a Socialist State. They must make it worth our while to remain, so they give us a cash consideration, which, if necessary, we can send to relatives abroad who are needing financial help. I often wonder," he said, "that you, having been a doctor, can remain on the Pension List of a Socialist State."

"What can I do?" said Comrade Henderson, "I have no means. I, too, have had relatives abroad needing financial help, and as you know, other countries will not receive Socialist Pensioners unless they can show they have the means to live. But don't let us talk of this just now. Tell me; what have you come to see me about?"

"Well, I have a critical case on hand, and I

John Bull : Socialist

want your advice. It is a question of inherited tendency. These ignorant Socialist rules—”

“Come, come,” said Comrade Henderson with a smile, “you are a Socialist yourself you know, and by your own election too. Be careful. But what is the trouble? Speak quietly; we are not alone. The officials are continually in and out of these rooms.”

A deep flush spread over the Doctor's face while his friend was speaking. This allusion to a vote, given at a moment when a Socialist victory was in the air, and since regretted as a piece of reckless and culpable ignorance, stung him deeply, but he only said: “We had better get out of this; we can't talk here. Could we not go outside? I have much to say to you.”

“Well, it is just the dinner-hour, and we shall miss it unless upon time. Suppose we talk afterwards. I am an old man, you know, and I feel the need of refreshment.”

“Refreshment! good heavens! Do you call the stuff they give you here refreshment? I get a much better dinner in the hospital.”

“Ah, but you are not yet a pensioner,” said

John Bull : Socialist

Comrade Henderson quietly, "neither are you with the Minority."

"No, mien Gott!" exclaimed the Doctor, "sooner than be with the Minority I'd—"

"By the way that reminds me, how is my friend Heinrich? I missed him very much when I left the hospital and became a pensioner. He was my valet before Socialism came in, and he followed me into the Socialist Hospital, and was taught to make himself generally useful. I found him a most excellent worker."

"Yes, and he is a most excellent worker still. He works in and out of hours. He is married, as we call it, to a woman who won't work at all. Nothing will make her, although she is quite capable; so Heinrich works for two, or according to Socialist rule his wife would be 'allowed to starve.'"*

"Really," said Comrade Henderson, "I had forgotten that rule. Heinrich must be very devoted. It doubles his working hours."

"It does," said the Doctor, "but this often

* The Woman Socialist, p. 92.

John Bull : Socialist

happens amongst the workers. You see, there is a rule to the effect that if a man is foolish enough voluntarily to work for another, it is his own concern,* and Heinrich has taken advantage of this rule in order to keep his wife, or she would have left him long ago and used her charms to enslave someone else. She is a beautiful creature, but incorrigibly idle."

"Ah, poor thing! She is her own enemy, as women so often are, and men too for that matter, or the Socialist State would never have existed."

"No: it appals me when I think of it. Even now I cannot imagine how it came about. You see we doctors have so little time for politics. I never realised the power of the vote."

"And, yet, if I remember rightly," said his friend smiling, "you were the foremost among the rowdy students who broke up the women's Suffragette meetings."

"I was! I was! You are right. But it was not because I connected the vote with

* Woman : Past, Present and Future, p. 194.

John Bull: Socialist

Socialism. For that matter, my ideas on the subject of a Socialist State were of the vaguest. I did it for the fun of the thing, and to prove to my mother and sister, who were militant Suffragettes, the superiority of man."

"Were not your mother and sister among the first to leave the country when the Socialists came into power?" said Comrade Henderson quietly.

"They were; and it was well for them that my mother had some little property abroad, or I cannot think what would have become of them."

"It *was* well," said Comrade Henderson with a sigh, "but I hear the dinner bell; we must go down. You will find yourself in strange company; I think it will interest you—only, be careful. Some of them may resent your more comfortable appearance as a doctor. It is impossible to make them realize the true meaning of the word Equality. Their judgment has been warped by the teachings of Socialism. By the way, Comrade Christopher Markham has just arrived to take up his residence as a pensioner. No doubt you

John Bull : Socialist

remember him. Before Socialism came in he was beginning to be known as a barrister. He is an old friend of mine; we were at school together. He may not be at dinner to-day, as he cannot at present get used to the 'reek of unsavoury dishes,' as he terms it, but I will find him later on. He can tell you how the Socialists captured the Government."

CHAPTER II

COMRADE HENDERSON, with his friend, Dr. Bryce, entered a long room, the walls of which were washed in terra-cotta. A hot, close, atmosphere greeted their nostrils as they came in—every window was shut; as most of the pensioners, having reached a time of life when rheumatism is in the ascendent, objected to the slightest breath of cold air, and the vote for “closed windows” had been carried.

A curious mental depression emanated from this company of aged pensioners; and as the Doctor's quick professional eye travelled round the room, and noted the forlorn and hopeless expression on the faces of the inmates, an urgent pity surged up in his heart for this needless wreck of humanity—a sense of revolt took hold of him, and it was with difficulty that he brought his countenance into keeping with his environment.

John Bull : Socialist

When the Socialist first came into power, an attempt was made to amalgamate the Pension Houses and the Co-operative Homes, as it was thought that the more cheerful society of younger people would be good for the aged. With this end in view the young girls were especially taught that they must act as "daughters" to the elderly women; but the position of being "daughter" to a comparative stranger of advanced years so irritated these young workers that the attempt was abandoned. It was also found, that necessary financial economies were more easily directed towards the Pension Houses than the Co-operative Homes, as the pensioner, ceasing to be a worker, was no longer an asset of the State.

All eyes were turned upon the new-comer as he entered the room, and the Doctor had scarcely taken his seat at one of the long and scantily furnished tables when a rough voice accosted him, "Oo be you, mister?"

"'E do seem somebody, don't 'e, comrades," came shrilly from one end of the room.

John Bull : Socialist

“ He does,” said a more educated feminine voice ; “ and perhaps he will be good enough to tell us who that somebody is. We are all attention ! ”

“ E’ll choke hissself for sure, if he don’t speak soon,” said another voice, noting the sudden flush on the Doctor’s face.

Comrade Henderson gently touched his arm. “ Speak to them,” he said, under his breath, “ tell them who you are. Speak quietly ; in a friendly manner.”

“ Well, comrades,” said the Doctor brightly, in answer to his friend’s appeal, “ I am, like yourselves, a citizen of this Socialist State, and a doctor in one of the hospitals. I have come down here to visit my friend and comrade, Dr. Henderson.”

“ Oh ! a Socialist are ye ! ” cried the first voice, “ and be ye likely to pay us a long visit, mister ; cos if so be, that be the case, I’d rayther sit t’other side o’ the room w’ere I can see yer back ’stead o’ yer face.”

“ Why do you object to my face, comrade ? ” said the Doctor quietly.

“ ‘ Ear that, comrades ! ” cried the voice.

John Bull: Socialist

“’E axes me, w’y do I objec’ to ’is face. Now I’ll tell ’ee. In the fust place, I do objec’ to yer face, ’cos it be the face o’ a man as is a damn sight better fed nor me—an’ that aint Socialism ; I do objec’ to yer face, cos it’s got a look in it as do say, ‘I knows a cussed lot mor’n them poor critters!’—an’ that aint Socialism ; an’ I do objec’ to yer face, cos it do tell me, sure’s death, as ye’ve no intention o’ endin’ yer days inside the walls o’ a Pension ’Ouse—an’, be damned to ’ee! that aint Socialism.”

“There you are mistaken, comrade,” said the Doctor, still quietly. “I shall come to a Pension House under exactly the same terms as you did. I have only to reach my sixty-fifth birthday.”

“And then, my mannie,” said a soft voice near him, “our good comrade, he’ll no longer object to your face, I’m thinkin’.”

Just then one of the officials came hastily up, and exclaimed, “Come, come, comrades ! we shall never get through dinner if you go on like this. Why are you talking so much to-day ? Let Comrade Bryce get something

John Bull : Socialist

to eat, he is tired with his long journey ;” and placing a plate of especially cooked viands in front of the Doctor, he was turning away, when a detaining hand was laid upon him, and Dr. Bryce, speaking under his breath, but with a note of command in his voice, said : “ I want to speak to you, comrade, after this meal is over. Something must be done with regard to the atmosphere of this room ; it is scandalous ! ”

“ It’s the Will of the People ! the Will of the People,” retorted the official. “ You can’t interfere with the Will of the People.”

“ Wait,” said the Doctor sternly, “ we will talk afterwards ; ” and the official, surprised into a sudden obedience, went angrily away.

The Doctor turned with a sigh to the dinner before him ; but seeing the eager eyes of the owner of the rough voice fixed upon his plate, he took it up and passed it over to him saying, “ There, my man, let me have yours : a fair exchange is no robbery—that’s Socialism.”

“ Thank ’ee, thank ’ee kindly, mister,” said the astonished and now softened voice ; “ but do ’ee call this a fair exchange—do ’ee call it ekal ? ”

John Bull : Socialist

"Certainly," said the Doctor; "you get what you want, and I, who am not hungry, get what I want. 'To each according to his needs,' you know."

"But all the other comrades aint got it too," persisted the voice.

"No—" said the Doctor nonplussed.

This reflection, however, did not prevent the owner of the rough voice from taking up his knife and fork, and falling to with a vigour which proved to the Doctor that the Socialist teaching "To each according to his needs" had no practical bearing upon the ménage of a Pension House. "Well, well," he said to himself, "I suppose they can't help it; but it is not without reason that the pensioner has been called the scapegoat of the Socialist State. However, I will take this opportunity of doing what I can for them;" and turning to his friend he said: "I am afraid I must leave you for a short time, I have something to say to the officials. Where shall I find you afterwards?"

"Let me see," said Comrade Henderson, "you want to talk to Comrade Markham. I

John Bull : Socialist

think we shall find him sitting in the last shelter along the sea front. It is some way off, so we shall probably have it to ourselves ; but if we stay in the Pension House we shall not get one minute alone. I will go and tell him you are coming."

"Thank you, that will do nicely," said the Doctor. "I will be with you as soon as possible. The sea breezes will be a welcome change after this atmosphere. Why, you could cut it with a knife!" and a determined look came into the Doctor's face as he rose and left the room.

The sound of raised voices directed him to a room, the door of which was standing open. "Ah, here is our comrade Dr. Bryce," said a white-haired official, who was seated at the end of the table with his hand on a large red book. "I believe," he continued, politely turning to the Doctor, "that you have something to say to us."

"I have indeed!" replied the Doctor, taking a seat indicated by a younger official. "I have just come from your dining-hall, and I cannot understand why the pensioners are

John Bull : Socialist

allowed to live in such an atmosphere. Not a single window was open. The heat was terrific. It is the worst possible thing for these aged people. They need oxygen."

"Well, comrade," replied the official, "it was put to the vote, and the majority were in favour of closed windows."

"Put to the vote!" exclaimed the Doctor, "but you cannot let an ignorant majority decide such a matter as this. You officials do not seem to realize that with these old people it is, in the long run, a matter of life and death."

"You must pardon me, comrade," said the official politely, "but I fear you do not understand the rules of the Socialist State. Everything is decided by the vote of the majority. Let me enlighten you," and he drew the red book towards him and rapidly turned over the pages. "Ah, here we are," he said.

"Wait," said the Doctor quickly, "I am not quite so ignorant as you seem to imagine. There is a rule to this effect: 'The State will provide inspectors or officials to instruct the

John Bull : Socialist

people in habits of health. The use of fresh air will be insisted upon.' ”*

“Quite so, quite so,” said the official hastily, “and I can assure you we have instructed them ; we are always instructing them, but it is quite impossible to insist. You see the fundamental teaching of the Socialist State is the Will of the People, and that can only be shown by the majority vote, that is : ‘The sovereign voice of the entire community.’ ”†

“But surely,” said the Doctor, “it is not the sovereign voice of the entire community that many of our pensioners should be half suffocated.”

“Oh, well, not exactly that,” said the official deprecatingly. “You put it in such a curious way, comrade ; but it works out like this, you see. Our first rule with regard to our pensioners is that, ‘Such cases will be treated with every possible attention and consideration.’ ”‡

“A most excellent rule,” said the Doctor.

* Woman Socialist, p. 71.

† Woman : Past, Present, and Future, p. 221.

‡ Woman : Past, Present, and Future, p. 224.

John Bull : Socialist

“Our next rule for the Pension House is—and here we have the majority vote—that ‘The greatest happiness of the greatest number should be its guiding principle.’ ”*

“Of course, of course! most certainly,” exclaimed the Doctor, “but why not put it into practice. Surely it would be for the greatest happiness of the greatest number if the pensioners were given plenty of fresh air, that is—I mean—er—well, it would, wouldn’t it?”

“Why should it?” said the official, “when the majority of the pensioners think otherwise?”

The Doctor was again nonplussed—he could not say why.

“You see,” continued the official, “when a worker in the Socialist State becomes a pensioner, he no longer stands in the same relation to the entire community. He now has a little world of his own, for we do not encourage friendships with outsiders. It is apt to induce restlessness and dissatisfaction. We try to make our pensioners find all their

* On the Morrow of the Social Revolution, p. 40.

John Bull : Socialist

happiness amongst themselves, and following this up, we are obliged to make use of the majority vote in the Pension House, as apart from the entire community. It is the only fair way."

"But suppose the majority vote should be an ignorant vote," said the Doctor, "what then?"

"Ah, that we cannot help," said the official. "We instruct them as far as possible, and if they will not receive our instructions—well, you have just had an instance of this."

"Still," persisted the Doctor, "I cannot understand why these pensioners show this determined dislike to fresh air."

"Not enough clo'es on," said a piping, but official voice at his side.

"Not enough clothes!" exclaimed the Doctor, turning sharply; "then give them more clothes! These old people should be well covered. I understand that the State treats them 'with every possible consideration.'"

"Every poss'ble consideration, yes," piped the official, "but more clo'es is not poss'ble. State can't afford it. Wish it could! Our

John Bull : Socialist

men comrades would be all the better for some warm, knitted weskits; and our women comrades would be quite grate—I mean—that is, they oughter 'ave some woollen shawls."

"Dear me! dear me!" said the Doctor, "I had no idea of this. I wonder now—" and he sat thinking for a moment. "You know," he said, turning to the senior official, "that we doctors have some financial emolument from the State, and I was thinking I should like to provide these pensioners with the warm clothing they require. As a paid worker in the State, I am expected to return some result of my work to the community."

"Well, you see," said the official, "that could only be done upon one condition."

"Indeed!" said the Doctor, "what is that?"

"The condition is, that you give every other Pension House in the State exactly the same amount of clothing. All Pension Houses are served alike. You seem to have again overlooked, comrade, the teaching of the State—'all to be equal.'"

"But I cannot give them all clothes!" exclaimed the Doctor. "How can I?"

John Bull : Socialist

"Then it can't be done at all;" said the official, "and," he continued, a note of asperity coming into his voice, "it seems to me, Comrade Bryce, that you know very little about a Socialist State, to the establishing of which you gave a vote, and I must—"

"Who could have known!" exclaimed the Doctor angrily. "Who could ever have imagined—"

"I must ask you," continued the official firmly, "to remember in the future that the Socialist State is not a Charity Organization Society."

"You are right! It is not," said the Doctor rising quickly, "*and yet the poor are still with us.*"

CHAPTER III

You gave a vote! a vote! a vote! you gave a vote! rang in the Doctor's ears as he made his way along the sea front towards the shelter where his friends were awaiting him.

"How could I have done it," he said to himself, "what demon of ignorance possessed me;" and his thoughts travelled back to the time when the Socialists first came into power, and he, with many others, stood aghast at the immediate predatory action of the Government, through the municipal and national appropriation of Land and Industrial Capital. He went over in his mind the means by which this action was accomplished, and remembered, with a grim smile, that it was just at this point that the Government received a check.

The Socialists had discovered two ways in

John Bull : Socialist

which simultaneously* the Land and Industrial Capital could be transferred to the people. "The one way was by the municipal and national appropriation (with such compensation to the existing owners as the community may think fit to give) of the land and industrial concerns."† "The second method was by taxation,"‡ and with regard to taxation it had been declared that, "There is no limit to the taxing powers of the State."¶ Indeed, the ultimate goal, as known to the Socialist leaders, was twenty shillings in the pound on the capital value. This was termed "the rendering unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." ||

But in this intention the Socialist Government had reckoned without the community, and they had to learn, that in spite of years of persuasive and belligerent propaganda, the ignorance still displayed by self-styled Socialists was likely to prove a stumbling-block of considerable magnitude.

The Christian and Ethical Socialists became

* The Socialist's Budget, p. 2.

† Ibid., p. 2. ‡ Ibid., p. 2. ¶ Ibid., p. 3. || Ibid., p. 6.

John Bull : Socialist

very troublesome, for, on the matter of compensation, they, together with all property owners, made a firm stand; and it was here that that Frankenstein of the Socialist State, the majority vote, first turned upon its creators. The Christian Socialists declared that "all reasonable Socialists expect to give full compensation for whatever is taken;"* and the community, making use of the initiative, advised the Government that owners having considered other forms of compensation and finding them without security, had decided to be "bought out,†" "by purchase for a fixed sum,‡" gold being the only legal tender. They further stated that owners included all those who held property in their own right, no matter how small and insignificant that property might be. This last clause was inserted to secure the financial freedom of property owners amongst the working classes in the event of their wishing to leave the country.

* Socialism an Essentially Christian Movement, p. 8.

† On the Morrow of the Social Revolution, p. 6.

‡ Land Nationalisation, p. 197.

John Bull : Socialist

The Government was immediately confronted with a riot of difficulty, and endeavoured to persuade the community of the unreasonableness of their demands—demands, which, if to, acceded would prove too great a strain upon the financial deposit of the country. It also reminded them, that, since the Right to Work Bill had been placed on the Statute Book, the country in the eyes of other nations had lost its credit; borrowing, therefore, would be an impossibility.

The Socialist leaders then, in the hope of gaining time, directed the attention of the community to their scheme with regard to Money Capital, and suggested that "all Capitalistic Property having been ascertained, should assume the form of bonds issued by the State;"* that these bonds should "be registered in the name of the owner,"† and the interest paid by the State, after deducting the necessary taxes.

"No!" cried the sovereign voice of the entire community, "that will not suit us. By such a scheme as this it would be "possible to

* On the Morrow of the Social Revolution, p. 10.

† Ibid., p. 10.

John Bull : Socialist

screw up the taxes to any extent without fear of their being evaded by any concealments.”* We should not be able to escape them by emigration, since it is from the State that all interest comes, and a tax, almost amounting to Confiscation, could be deducted from the interest before it was paid out. It would be possible to raise the progressive income and property tax as high as necessary. This might even “amount to confiscation of the large property.”† No, no, we will not accept these terms.”

The immediate and natural retort of the Socialist leaders was: “We understood that you were Socialists, and that you had given your vote to the establishing of a Socialist State. This scheme that we have placed before you is the Teaching and Intention of Socialism. Why, then, do you not conform to it?”

“Ah, but,” replied the Christian and Ethical Socialists, (whose numbers had been greatly

* On the Morrow of the Social Revolution, p. 10.

† Ibid., p. 10.

John Bull : Socialist

increased by continued propaganda) there is also another Teaching and Intention of Socialism, and that is the Will of the People ; and we have shown by a Majority Vote, that it is not the will of the people that anything approaching Confiscation should be brought to bear upon existing owners. We have become Socialists in order to prevent, not to encourage, exploitation. We will not—”

Here the Doctor's thoughts became somewhat confused. He could hardly remember what happened next. The Socialist formula always fatigued him, and his recent and unexpected encounter with the Pension House officials began to tell upon him. It was a relief when the next clear recollection sent his thoughts travelling on more familiar and happier lines, and his mind rested in the remembrance of his mother and sister, as they stood on the quay, cheered, in their departure, by his own bright optimism. It was many years ago now, but he could still hear his young and confident voice saying—

“Now, mother, whatever you do, don't worry. I shall get on all right ; and you and

John Bull : Socialist

Jessie will have enough to live on in a simple way, with that little property of yours ; and if you get into any difficulty let me know. Don't keep it to yourselves. I have a scheme in my head which includes—well, something very like L. S. D. After all, mother, the State gave you a little gold. Some owners got hardly anything but promissory notes. And, mother, I hope you won't mind, but Smithson got so little for his cottage that it is not enough to take his wife and the kids out of the country, so I lent him two ponies (he won't let me give it) out of the money we got for the estate . . . That's right, mother ! I knew you wouldn't mind. You see, mother, Smithson is such a good workman that the Socialists are anxious to keep him ; but he is determined to have his freedom. He says that none of his children shall ever see the inside of a Training Home. Who knows who they may mix with ; and they are such jolly little kids. Smithson says he is only too thankful for the loan. Now good-bye, mother, don't worry. I suppose your promissory notes are all safe. Perhaps some day you may get—

John Bull: Socialist

“Devil take them!” said the Doctor, as this last recollection came home to him, “the first new government repudiated these promissory notes; but, indeed, how could they help it? How could they help it?”

“Bryce! Bryce! Comrade Bryce! you are going too far; you have passed the shelter. Why, man, what are you thinking about?” said Comrade Henderson smiling, as the Doctor turned at the call. “You remind me of Heinrich. He often fell into a brown study, and when I rallied him he would say, ‘I haf mooch to think about that you know not of.’”

“Yes,” said Comrade Markham, coming out of the shelter and shaking hands heartily with the Doctor, “yes, and it seems that Heinrich has still ‘mooch to think about.’ The officials, also, have much to think about with regard to Heinrich. They have lately discovered that years ago he left the Fatherland, glad to escape from his Socialist companions; and he now considers that he has been ‘caught in von trap.’ He continually has letters from abroad, and talks darkly of our coming release. He

John Bull : Socialist

should be cautioned . . . So this is our friend who wishes to know how the Socialists captured the government," said the ex-barrister, regarding the Doctor with interest. "Well, he shall know all I can tell him."

"Stay a moment!" said Comrade Henderson hastily; "here are two of the officials. I will go and engage them in conversation. I expect we shall talk over your delinquencies, Bryce. That will take some time. You will see no more of us until the evening meal. Well, good-bye, for the present, but beware of the officials," he said, under his breath.

CHAPTER IV

“So you want to know how the Socialists captured the government,” said the ex-barrister, as he settled himself comfortably in a corner of the shelter. “Well, it is not a very long story, although it extends over many years. Their first and most important action was, of course, propaganda, as their aim was the vote. The Social Democratic Party—the oldest and most outspoken of the English Socialist organizations—and the Fabian Society, worked continually at this; but it was not until the Independent Labour Party came to the fore, with its avowed methods, ‘The education of the Community in the principles of Socialism,’* that Socialist propaganda became a force, which eventually

* Modern Socialism, p. 356.

John Bull : Socialist

captured the vote. You heard it everywhere : at the street corners, at innumerable meetings and debates ; it was circulated in cheap literature ; the children learnt it in the Socialist Sunday Schools ; it tracked through the country leaving foot-prints behind ; it was continually heard on the platform of the militant Suffragist—”

“ The Suffragists ! ” exclaimed the Doctor. “ What had they to do with Socialism ? ”

“ I said the militant Suffragists,” replied the Barrister. “ They continually preached the Right to Work. The leaders of the militant Suffragists were Socialists—and very clever Socialists they were. One of their Socialist writers had declared that, ‘ It must be understood by Socialists that the political enfranchisement of women is an absolutely necessary part of the establishment of Socialism,’* and the Socialists did understand it ; they understood it well. Their energy was incessant ; and there was another point that they well understood, and that was the psychology

* The Woman Socialist, p. 97.

John Bull: Socialist

of the crowd. The way the militant Suffragists raked in the shekels for their war chest was quite unprecedented."

"Yes, I remember that," said the Doctor; "and I remember too, that they scored in other ways; their arguments were said to be so logical."

"Ah," said the Barrister dryly, "I wonder if you have ever heard the reply of Professor Jowett when asked whether logic was an art or a science? 'It is neither an art or a science,' he replied, 'it is a dodge.'"

"No," said the Doctor smiling, "I never heard that before."

"Think it over," said the Barrister, "it may enlighten you. Well, as you know, the women eventually got their wish, and the franchise was given 'on the same terms as it is or may be granted to men.' But before this happened, an important Labour victory had taken place, and that was the affiliation of the Miners' Federation and Trade Union Congress to the Labour Party. You will not understand this unless you realize that Socialist propaganda was continually going on, as the aim of the

John Bull : Socialist

Labour Party was the Right to Work Bill. They considered that the passing of this Bill would be a solution of the difficulty of unemployment, which at that time was pressing so heavily as to arouse the active sympathy of the people. The Right to Work was an attractive phrase to the impartial observer—who failed to realize that were this phrase brought into legal activity he would no longer be impartial—and it was expected, and rightly, that many thinking as Liberals and not as Socialists would vote for this Bill. Nevertheless it failed again and again, and the Socialists began to press for Adult Suffrage—”

“Ah! I remember that well,” said the Doctor; “everybody seemed to be fighting everybody else.”

“Yes, it was a turmoil certainly,” said the Barrister, “but it was a primary movement in the scheme for Socialism. The woman’s platform came again to the front; and when it was argued by opposers that Adult Suffrage would result in a woman’s Government, the immediate reply was, that that was no logical argument as it did not touch the real justice of

John Bull : Socialist

the franchise, which has nothing to do with numerical superiority, on either side. Others—a little timid as to this argument—suggested that the Soldiers' and Sailors' Vote should be made a 'proxy vote,' which would lessen the disparity of numbers between the sexes. However, to make a long story short, Adult Suffrage for men and women was eventually given by an exhausted Government, with the result that the Right to Work Bill was shortly placed on the Statue Book."

"Yes," said the Doctor, "and what else did they do?"

"That was enough," replied the Barrister. "What more do you want?"

"Well, I should have hardly have thought—But, you see," said the Doctor hastily, "I know so little. I was a mere student at the time; and now we doctors are worked so hard—the State cannot, or will not, afford many of us—that I get very little time for anything. This is the only excuse I can give for my ignorance."

"Alas! poor doctors," said the Barrister smiling; "and yet you doctors are the happiest

John Bull : Socialist

people in a Socialist State. You are not asked, as the rest of us are—as I was—to become at any moment a bricklayer, a baker, tinker, tailor, candlestick-maker, anything, when with all the soul within you, you are longing to be a barrister. There are only a few lawyers—half of them women—‘with special or departmental knowledge’* of a peculiar character in the Socialist State; and I was not among the chosen. Why! I laid some of the bricks in this very Pension House—very bad bricks they were too. I afterwards became a clerk in the office of one of the officials. That suited me better, although the official was an over-bearing brute; and just before I became a Pensioner I was by turns a tailor fitting dummies in the village warehouses, or breaking stones on the road. It was considered easy work for one getting on in years.”

“Ha! ha!” laughed the Doctor, “fancy you fitting dummies!”

“Come, come,” said the Barrister, “don’t make fun of your elders; show a proper sense

* The Woman Socialist, p. 87.

John Bull : Socialist

of equality. You see," he continued, "the reason for a worker becoming a Jack of all trades is, that unless the Social labour is continuous for each member of the community the 'short working day' cannot go on. A builder, for instance, must know more than his own trade, as under certain atmospheric conditions he cannot work at this trade. There is also another reason. Under Socialist rule 'every man decides for himself in which branch he desires to be employed ;' * and this produces a superfluity of workmen in one branch and a deficiency in another,† so that a man must know several trades if production is to go on. The more practical of the Socialist leaders regard this as one of the most difficult problems in management ; for when this inequality occurs, as it does frequently, it is the duty of the Executive to arrange matters, with the result that he sometimes gets his head broken."

"I should think he did!" said the Doctor laughing.

* Woman : Past, Present, and Future, p. 183.

† Ibid., p. 183.

John Bull: Socialist

“The Executive does not laugh,” said the Barrister. “But, now we must get on ; I see you do not understand the Right to Work Bill. Well, this Bill provided ‘that a man had a legal right to demand that the State should provide him with work, at trade union rate of wages, and failing that, that the State should provide him, and those dependent on him, with the necessaries of life.’ Now, surely, you see, that this Bill was framed with the intention of making an end of the capitalist system.” *

“How so?” said the Doctor.

“Well, when a workman is secure in his existence even when not in work, nothing is easier to him than to disable the capitalist. † If a dispute breaks out, the employer must necessarily get the worst of it. Besides, the Trade Unionists can raise the rate of wages as high as they please ; so high, as to cut off all profits from the manufacturers. What could prevent them? Of course, it ended in the manufacturers and owners of industrial

* The Reformer's Year-Book, 1907, p. 122.

† On the Morrow of the Social Revolution, p. 6.

John Bull : Socialist

concerns being "bought out" at a great loss by the State. Most of the manufacturers left the country, and with them went some of the finest brains in the land. It was the owners of the smaller industrial concerns who suffered most. I remember a client of mine, the son of a bricklayer, who, by industry and foresight, had become a small, but successful builder, and who was making a comfortable living when the Right of Work Bill ruined him. He could not afford to pay the wages demanded by the Trades Union, and was forced to sell his business to the State. He got next to nothing for it, as the State did not value these small concerns—they found them troublesome. I was very sorry for him, but could do nothing. He afterwards became a bricklayer in one of the State Building concerns."

"Poor fellow," said the Doctor, "what a change for him."

"Yes," said the Barrister, "but there were many of these cases. The same thing happened to another client of mine, a master baker, in a country town—quite in a small way, but successful. He had originally

John Bull : Socialist

been a miner, but hated the work, and had saved up enough to purchase a small goodwill. He had a wife and two children, but the money he got for his bakery was only enough to send his wife and youngest child out of the country—he hoping to follow later with the other child. However, he shortly found himself engulfed in one of the huge Socialist Bread Factories, where he was told that money wages were not given, as all the necessities of life would be provided by the State. He went to live in a Co-operative Home, and his child was sent to a Training Home, which happened to be a long way from the place where the father worked—family ties not being respected by the Socialist. When he remonstrated—as he did, with flying fists—he was firmly advised to look at the other side of the question, which meant State provision for life through his own labour-power.”

“What did he do” said the Doctor. “What became of him?”

“Well, happily for him, his wife set to work and in time earned enough to send passage money for him and the child; but he had some difficulty in getting the boy. He tramped all

John Bull : Socialist

the way to the Training Home, and demanded his son but the officials told him that 'property in children' had 'ceased to exist.'* The boy was now a citizen of a Socialist State, and would be cared for accordingly. However, Harris—that was his name—feeling valiant with money in his pocket, made short work of this. He snapped his fingers in the faces of the officials ; swore freely, calling them damned kidnappers ; and finally, by some skilful means—his wits being sharpened by the fact of ownership—he managed to obtain his child and they disappeared from the country."

"Ah, I am glad of that," said the Doctor. "How thankful he must have been to get away from these Co-operative and Training Homes. I cannot see the reason of them."

"Can't you," said the Barrister. "Well, it is quite easy. It is a matter of economy in finance and a saving of work. You see, it is relatively cheaper to keep a great many than to keep a few, and it is less work to prepare for a common table,† such as we have in the

* Socialism, its Growth and Outcome, p. 299.

† Woman : Past, Present, and Future, p. 165.

John Bull : Socialist

Co-operative Homes. Besides, there is another and more fundamental reason. In a Socialist State every production worker is compelled to work, not only for himself, but also for the non-productive workers, such as officials, executives, invalids, and children; and if, during childhood, the coming worker is not thoroughly well-fed and trained, he will not grow up sufficiently strong and healthy to take his place as a productive worker in the community. Every child born into a Socialist State is regarded as a future productive worker; but if, as time goes on, he shows himself the peer of his fellow-workers, he is elected by these workers to 'exercise the executive function' in place of a productive function.* So, you see how fundamental it is that the child should be well cared for; and the State considers that this care cannot be entrusted to the parents; so at six years of age, and sometimes much earlier, the child becomes the entire responsibility of the State, and is placed in a Training Home 'under the care of common guardians.'†

* Woman : Past, Present, and Future, p. 183.

† Ibid., p. 217.

John Bull : Socialist

The community is taught to consider that this is the best arrangement, but even with all this care—that is, care given as far as the State can afford—the workers are often very idle. That is why the pension age is placed at sixty-five instead of at fifty, as the Socialists originally intended. The State is obliged to get as much work as it can out of its citizens.”

“Dear me! dear me! it is all very strange,” said the Doctor; “but I have been so taken up with my work in the hospital that I have hardly realised it. Still, there ought to be some way to alter this manner of living. I wonder, now, if we could work up a majority vote, so that parents could again, if they wished, bring up their own children. This lack of family life is fatal to the right development of the community.”

“I am afraid not,” said the Barrister. “You see, when the Socialists first came into power the leaders found the majority vote exceedingly troublesome. It continually turned against them, so they devised a scheme whereby this might be prevented. They greatly enlarged the sphere and activity of the officials, who

John Bull : Socialist

were so increased in number that a kind of aristocracy was formed. Each official is expected to be able to place his hand on a certain number of voters, who can be counted upon to vote in favour of the Government, and this places a comparatively settled minority. Whether this minority votes for, or against, the Government is a matter of no moment."

"What an extraordinary thing to do!" exclaimed the Doctor.

"Not at all," said the Barrister. "It is merely an underground form of propaganda applied with dexterity. With a Citizen Army it is quite necessary that the Government should have its hand on a majority vote. Besides, there are other reasons. You see, the Socialist scheme may be likened to a chain of a certain length. If a single link is dropped out, this chain becomes too short for the purpose for which it is intended. Now it was the duty of the Socialist leaders, as Socialists, to see that not one of these links did drop out; and they endeavoured from the first to do this. But what could they do with a community, the

John Bull : Socialist

majority of whose members knew as little about real Socialism as a child in the nursery, or, let us say, as yourself. Think for a moment! Would a free majority have voted for Co-operative Homes? Never! Would it have voted for the separation of parent and child? How could it! Would it have voted for the removal of State emigration—a necessary step if Socialism was to go on, but which placed a worker without means, as a prisoner in his own country? You know it would not! And the Socialist leaders knew this; so an artificial majority had to be made, and I have told you how it was done.”

“I wonder other nations did not interfere with us,” said the Doctor.

“Ah, that may come yet,” said the Barrister, “as our present relations with other Powers are exceedingly strained. Even our Colonies repudiated us. They are now entirely self-governing.”

“I suppose that is why our food and other requisites are so scarce,” said the Doctor.

“That is one reason,” replied the Barrister, “but the principal reason is that we cannot

John Bull : Socialist

count upon the workers working. They do not realize a sufficient incentive. This was an urgent problem from the beginning of the New Society, as the leaders well understood that production must not be allowed to stand still, not even for a few weeks.* As regards the workers, the Socialist leaders counted upon the 'force of habit,'† weak though they knew it to be, as one inducement for keeping them in the factory but this failed with the younger workers at any rate. The desire for change is also a force, and the younger workers declared they preferred, for a time, to do no work at all. They were not idle, they said, but seeing that change was going on all around them, and having now 'the right to existence'‡ (this being the highest legal principle discovered by juridical Socialism) they, too, wished for a change. They might work overtime later, they said. The Socialist leaders were at their wits end. The Socialist State was not yet ready for the 'categoric imperative,'§ and but

* On the Morrow of the Social Revolution, p. 11.

† Ibid., p. 12.

‡ Ibid., p. 41.

§ Ibid., p. 40.

John Bull: Socialist

for this artificial treatment of the vote, it must have come to an end."

"Why did they not give them an increased money-wage," said the Doctor.

"How could they!" exclaimed the Barrister. "Besides, it was the intention of the Socialist leaders that there should, eventually, be no money in the new community. The workers are now given a receipt for the time spent in work, * which they exchange for articles of the most various kinds. † Anyhow, they could not have given money wages, so much money had gone out of the country in the matter of Compensation. It was then that the Socialist leaders learnt their lesson with regard to the majority vote."

"But, I don't quite understand how the artificial majority vote coerces the workers," said the Doctor.

"It does not entirely coerce them," said the Barrister. "The minority is often very troublesome—dangerously so at times; but, you

* Woman: Past, Present and Future, p. 193.

† Ibid., p. 194.

John Bull : Socialist

see, the discipline in a Socialist State appears as 'the free submission to self chosen leadership and to the will of the majority of ones' own comrades.' * This is what the workers are taught, and they do not realize that this majority is due to the large increase of officials who coerce the voters through astute propaganda. They think that they themselves have made the laws, and that they are enforcing their own will."

"Then do the workers coerce one another in the matter of work?" said the Doctor.

"Most certainly they do! with very good reason—the reason of self-protection. You see, the fundamental rule of the Socialist State is 'the equal duty of all to labour without distinction of sex.' † The intention is, that each worker shall execute an equal amount of work, which amount will be regulated by the requirements of the community as a whole. So that when a worker, or a group of workers, show themselves as inclined to shirk their share of labour, they are hustled by their

* On the Morrow of the Social Revolution, p. 13.

† Woman : Past, Present and Future, p. 180.

John Bull : Socialist

comrades, who see in the laziness of these workers a lack of bread, or longer hours of labour for themselves. In its working out, Socialism destroys all individual freedom. Predominating in the Socialist teaching, 'each for all and all for each' is a compulsory inter-dependence—an inter-dependence which places each man in fear of his comrade, and imposes a condition of things which makes for continual antagonism. You see, in the practical working out of his teaching, so strong a mutual claim is made that a worker in a Socialist State, who does not answer to this claim, is promptly knocked about by his fellows and finally allowed to starve."

"Allowed to starve!" exclaimed the Doctor, "then the legal right to existence has conditions. But what has become of the Christian Socialists?"

"Ah," said the Barrister dryly, "they left the country some time ago, except a few who remained as missionaries. These missionaries are regarded with keen suspicion by the officials, who keep them carefully shadowed."

"I think I shall turn missionary," said the

John Bull : Socialist

Doctor. "The officials would not dare to interfere with me, or I might send them to kingdom come;" and the Doctor yawned and stretched his arms.

"You are tired?" said the Barrister.

"No, it is not that," replied the Doctor, "but whenever I listen to the Socialist formula, for some reason or other my mind feels old and grey. It is a curious feeling."

"Yes," said the Barrister smiling, "and you have a curious way of putting it; but the reason is, that this formula is a logical argument founded upon a premise which does not exist, and that is always enervating to the mind. You see, the premise is, that, for the establishing of the Socialist State, "the proletariat will require high intelligence, strong discipline, perfect organisation of its great masses;" * and before this can co-exist with government of the people, for the people, and by the people, the people must have become a collective "overman," that is an overman compared with the finer type of his ancestors."

* On the Morrow of the Social Revolution, p. 42.

John Bull : Socialist

"They must, indeed!" exclaimed the Doctor.

"Of course," continued the Barrister, "the Socialists have an answer to this. They say that 'a cause is always better than its supporters, a principle greater than many of those who profess it ;' * but this is a dangerous attitude with regard to Socialism, and it is well to keep in mind that the practical working out of the Socialist principle is only as great as the medium through which it shows itself."

"Hence these tears," said the Doctor quietly.

"Quite so! quite so!" said the Barrister quickly, a dark flush spreading over his face. "You are right. The unhappiness of the Minority is sometimes past endurance. No matter what they may wish, or what initiative they may put forward, they must come to a respectful stop before the majority vote, and are easily shoved on one side. They are hopeless prisoners in a country governed by themselves. Talk of the capitalist exploiting the working-man!" exclaimed the Barrister.

* The Woman Socialist, page 4.

John Bull : Socialist

“Why! no one has ever exploited the working-man as the Socialist did, when he taught him a State Socialism. He exploited, through a mere trick of words, the working-man’s ignorance, and so obtained his vote. What time had these workers for the study of this most fallacious teaching? They were the victims of carefully chosen sops, given at a time when their necessities were very great. These astute Socialist pedagogues knew what they were about!” said the Barrister, his voice rising. “They knew—”

“Hush!” said the Doctor quickly, “here are two of the officials. Ah! that’s right, they have gone down a side street. I think,” he continued hesitatingly—“well, are you not a little hard on the Socialist leaders? They thought they were right.”

“Thought!” ejaculated the Barrister, “*thought!* Yes,” he said more quietly, “they did a lot of thinking. They were accused of ‘thinking in pictures.’ A little thinking, in practical detail, would have proved to them that unless you can show a Socialist principle which will secure (think what this

John Bull : Socialist

means—secure) ‘the regular process of the social labour,’* this new community must resolve itself into that worst of all despotisms, the despotism of a cunning officialdom. No matter what these officials may wish, no matter how high their motives may have originally been, that is the action they must take up if the Socialist State is still to retain the outward appearance of Socialism. There is no other way.”

“Well,” said the Doctor, smiling, “they are not despots with regard to the Medical Faculty. We doctors have outwitted them many a time.”

“Ah, yes,” said the Barrister, “that is so with regard to individual cases, which have come within your province; or when, as the Medical Faculty, you are determining upon a course of action—even then you are continually pulled up by the poverty of medical requisites. But you cannot make a majority vote in the community, the officials see to that. Many of you are so busy that you do

* On the Morrow of the Social Revolution, p. 12.

John Bull : Socialist

not vote at all. But look," said the Barrister, "here is Henderson coming to meet us ; we must not talk any longer."

"I will vote in future," said the Doctor rising, "you may count upon that. Well, well," he sighed, "I often wonder how it will all end."

"Ah," said the Barrister, "that is difficult to say. It may be unexpected revolt in the community, or it may be—well, ask Heinrich."

PART II

CHAPTER I

Two years had passed since Comrade Dr. Bryce had come to some understanding with regard to the workings of the Socialist State. This understanding had not been without results, one of which was to place him still more firmly as arbiter between certain of his patients and the hospital officials. His position in the State, as a comparatively independent citizen did not add to his popularity with the Socialist Government, and more of his time than he cared to realize was taken up with, as it appeared to him, mere verbal scrimmage.

When the Socialists first came into power the leaders were more or less advanced in years, and were eventually succeeded in the

John Bull : Socialist

Government by a younger generation, whose views with regard to Socialist Administration had undergone a change. The freedom of the woman—which had been the most penetrating cry of the Socialist movement—was greatly curtailed. The “sovereign voice” no longer regarded her as “a free being the equal of man,”* as her chief work had been done when, as an Adult Suffragist, she placed her vote for the Socialist cause. As regards numbers she was in the minority, as many women objecting to Socialist rule with regard to marriage and the State care of children had left the country; and the ruling of the Socialist State was controlled by the dominant vote of man.

The child, John Bull, was still in the hospital under the care of Comrade Dr. Bryce. The advice given by Dr. Henderson was happily successful, and the boy now presented an appearance of robust health; so much so that the officials had again and again reminded Comrade Bryce that it was time he was sent to a Training Home. “You see, comrade,” said

* Woman : Past, Present, and Future, p. 229.

John Bull : Socialist

a senior official, "the boy is losing time. He has everything to learn if he is to become a useful worker in the State ; and you know," he continued anxiously, "that unless we can train a better class of workers production cannot go on. The needs of the people are not being satisfied. We have had to greatly raise the scale of living for the miners—they won't work on the same equality as the other comrades. I can't see where we are drifting to. Some of our best Workers have written to friends abroad for means to leave the country, and we have no way of preventing this. John Bull is an intelligent child ; we hope he will become a good worker, but it is quite time his training began. We have heard from a Training Home up north that they have a vacancy, and we have decided that the child shall be sent at once."

"He will not be sent up north," said the Doctor firmly. "He must be placed where I can see him at least once a month. The boy's health is not yet established, he still needs care."

"But the Training Homes in the town are

John Bull : Socialist

full," said the official. "There is no room for another child ; we have had to send several up north."

"Very well," said the Doctor, "then the boy will remain in the hospital, at any rate for the present."

"But he can have medical care elsewhere," urged the officials. "There are other doctors."

"That may be," replied the Doctor, "but the boy's case is peculiar. I am putting him through a course of treatment advised by Comrade Dr. Henderson, who, as you know, is no longer here. The responsibility now rests with me. You must make other arrangements."

So other arrangements were made ; and a place was found for the boy in a small Training Home in an out-lying district ; and it only remained to inform little John Bull that the time had come when he must realize his future as a productive worker in the community.

A strong affection had grown up between this little lad and the kindly Doctor, whose unremitting care for this once fractious little patient had been rewarded by the fact that the boy had now bloomed into a beautiful and

John Bull : Socialist

intelligent child. He was a great favourite with the older patients, to whom he was a source of much interest and amusement. He constantly managed to escape from the children's ward, and if allowed, would sit for hours by the chair of Comrade 'Gaffer' Smith, as the Doctor called him, listening to stories which always began with "W'en I was a lad."

"Comrade Elizabeth," said the Doctor one morning to the executive of the children's ward, "I am dining early and alone to-day ; I should like to have little John Bull with me, I have something to say to him. It is decided that he is to go into a Training Home."

"Ah! he won't like that," said Comrade Elizabeth.

"No, and I do not like it either," said the Doctor, "but it is the rule of the State ; I suppose it has to be. Let him come to me about one o'clock, please. Tell Comrade Martha—or is it Heinrich, who is cooking this week—to send in a good dinner ; something that a child will like. It is the last time the boy will dine with me."

So little John Bull, clad in a dark overall,

John Bull : Socialist

and with newly washed rosy cheeks, trotted into the Doctor's sanctum exactly as the clock struck one, "Here I is!" he cried, "come to 'ave dinner with you, just like a grown-up! Comrade Elizabeth she says, you got somefin' to say to me. Wot you got to say? Dear Doctor," he said carressingly, pressing his curly head against the Doctor's arm, "don't say nuffin' I shan't like!"

"We won't talk about that until after dinner, John," said the Doctor hastily. "It is such a nice dinner—all for a little boy! See what Heinrich is placing on the table."

"I knows," said John, as he climbed into his seat, "it's a chuckie. Day 'fore yesterday I sawed 'im flappin' round the yard. Comrade Lizabeth she says she'd never, no never, 'ave bin a Soslist if she'd knowed we'd go on eatin' chuckies. 'Fishal says she's a old fool. Is she a old fool, dear Doctor?" said John inquiringly.

"I do not find her so," said the Doctor; "in fact, she is my right hand in the children's ward. She rarely makes a mistake. Why, it was she who made you that nice overall."

John Bull : Socialist

"I don't like 'im," said John. "I likes coats and trousers ; but 'Fishal says State can't afford it for little boys. 'Fishal says wen I'm a grown-up I shall 'ave coats and trousers ; but Comrade Gaffer Smith 'e larf and say, much more likely I'll be going around in a smock wi' no shoes to me feet, mazin' and mazin' for a bite o' bread."

"Ah," said the Doctor smiling, "I am afraid Comrade Gaffer Smith is somewhat of a pessimist where the Socialist State is concerned. You see, John, you must try and grow up a good worker and then, perhaps, you may be able to get some of the things you want. It is time you were trained."

John's blue eyes regarded the Doctor with sudden apprehension, and his little round chin began to quiver, but the Doctor hastily directed his attention to Heinrich who was coming into the room with another dish.

"What a lovely pudden," said John as an apple tart was placed on the table ; "we don't 'ave no nice puddens like that. Gaffer Smith 'e says—"

"I am afraid, John, you are a great deal

John Bull : Socialist

too much with Gaffer Smith," said the Doctor. "I shall have to talk to Comrade Elizabeth."

"Well, 'e says," continued John, who was carefully scrutinizing the plate in front of him, "that wen 'e was a lad you allus had little black things in apple puddens that made 'em taste nice; but there aint no black things in this pudden. W'y aint there?"

"Oh, you mean cloves," said the doctor. "Well, you see, cloves do not grow in this Socialist State, and it is very difficult to obtain them. You must try and enjoy your pudding, as you call it, without cloves."

"Gaffer Smith 'e says," said John, who had been with his elderly companion all the morning and could not get away from his influence, "'e says that w'en I'm a grown-up, if I've got the spunk of a mouse I shan't stay in a Soslist State. 'E says a damn sharp young 'un can get out, but a old un's fastened in like a rat in a trap—a rat in a trap 'e says. 'Ave you ever seen a rat in a trap, dear Doctor?"

"Yes, I have seen many," said the Doctor, "but we will not talk about that just now. Comrade Elizabeth is coming to speak to me

John Bull : Socialist

for a few minutes, and then I have something to say to you. See," he said quickly, "here is a large rosy apple. You can eat this while I am talking to Comrade Elizabeth."

What little boy would not like to set his teeth in a large rosy apple. John was not the exception to this ; and his little white teeth were soon busily employed, which diverted his attention from Comrade Elizabeth and the Doctor, who were talking in low tones at the other end of the room.

" You see," said the Doctor, " the officials are determined that John shall go into a Training Home at once. He is nearly two years past the age placed by the State and is terribly backward. I fear I shall have to give way ; so I sent for you to ask if you can manage to see the boy once a week. Although he looks so rosy and well, he still needs great care or he will have a relapse. I have already seen the officials of the Training Home, and have put the case before them ; but it would be far better if you would see Comrade Dorothea, who has charge of the younger children just at present. Tell her it is most important that the

John Bull : Socialist

boy should cry as little as possible. It inflames the eyes, and they are not yet strong enough for a quick reaction. I shall see him myself at least once a month, but that is not sufficient. Do you think you can make some arrangements with the official to see the boy regularly?"

Comrade Elizabeth thought for a moment. If there was anything she dreaded it was making arrangements with officials. The long anxious arguments, the determined bluff of the officials, and her own feeling of helplessness so unnerved her that, but for her love for the child, she would have made the Doctor understand that the effort could not be made. Comrade Elizabeth once had a little boy of her own, that is, her own as far as the State would permit. He came to her some few years after the Socialists captured the Government, and for a time was a source of joy and happiness. But presently this little lad, according to the rules of the State, was placed in a Training Home, and his mother saw very little more of him. For some reason the boy grew up with a hatred of his surroundings, and

John Bull: Socialist

as he grew older this hatred was extended to the woman he had once called mother, as he always considered it was due to her that he had been born in a Socialist State. As a man his nature was hard and revengeful, and he extracted with a determined vigilance his "claim" from his fellow-workers. Many a broken head was due to the weight of his fist; but as he himself was an excellent worker, and so fulfilled the conditions necessary to "enlightened selfishness,"* this man was regarded by the officials as a desirable citizen of the State. Women could have spoken differently; but this desirable citizen had a way of quietly terrorising the weak, which would have greatly shocked the few remaining Christian and Ethical Socialists had it ever come to their knowledge. The social atmosphere † from which the faddist in Socialism hoped so much, had no power over this worker; and at last having caused the death of a comrade while forcing his claim, he was quietly sent out of the

* A New Catechism of Socialism, p. 30.

† Woman: Past, Present, and Future, p. 218.

John Bull : Socialist

country, and the Socialist State knew him no more.

This experience had bitten deeply into the heart of Comrade Elizabeth. She always declared that had the child been in her own keeping he would have turned out differently. Faults in the character of the boy's father, difficult to detect, but well known to her, had been inherited by the son—faults which only an intelligent and loving patience could have watched, changed, and finally eliminated. Comrade Elizabeth held the Socialist Government responsible for the developing character of her child ; and when they retorted that she should have chosen the boy's father more wisely, she sternly reminded them that, in a Socialist State where there are no laws for the protection of women, such choice could not always be a matter of deliberate forethought.

“Well,” said the Doctor at last, having waited patiently for some few moments, “do you think you will be able to arrange it.”

‘Ah, forgive me,” said Comrade Elizabeth, but my thoughts ran away with me ; I really

John Bull : Socialist

think sometimes, I am as stupid as the officials say I am. Well—about the child. We have an official and executives' council to-morrow afternoon and I will put it before them. If the vote is against me I shall look to you to alter the decision."

"I will certainly do that," said the Doctor, "although it is not within my province; but I have my hand on the officials in this matter. I can retain the boy in the hospital if I think right; but now everything is settled, it would be better to get him into the Training Home at once."

The last words of the Doctor arrested the attention of little John Bull, who, having finished his apple was fidgeting about the room and finally came to a stand-still at the doctor's knee—"Get 'oo into a training home?" said John suspiciously.

"You!" said the doctor without further ceremony. "Little boys who speak as you do need a lot of training. Why! the officials tell me you know nothing at all."

"But I don't want to go," said John.

"Ah, but we cannot always do as we wish—

John Bull : Socialist

not even little boys," said the Doctor kindly. "You see, John," he continued, "you must try and learn all you can, so that you may become a good worker in the State. All the other little boys and girls have to do this."

"Will you come and see me?" said John in a determined manner.

"Yes, I will come whenever I can," said the Doctor, "and Comrade Elizabeth is coming too. She—"

"Will *you* come and see me," persisted John. "Come—every day," he said, emphasizing each word with his little forefinger.

"No," said the Doctor, smiling, "I cannot do that; my patients will need me, and—"

"Then I won't go! Not me; I won't!" said John firmly.

"Now, John," said the Doctor seriously, "listen to me. You know—"

But John would not listen. "Can't I come home every afternoon?" he pleaded. "Gaffer Smith 'e says, w'en 'e was a lad, little boys like me didn't 'ave to stay in Training 'Omes all the nights as well as all the days. 'E says little boys like me always come 'ome in the after-

John Bull : Socialist

noons," said John breathlessly, his chin beginning to quiver.

"Don't let him cry," said Comrade Elizabeth anxiously. "He had a crying fit yesterday ; it is so bad for him."

But the warning came too late. John's apprehensive blue eyes were searching the stern face of the Doctor for some signs of relent ; but finding none, an ominous flush suffused his cheeks, and he burst into a storm of tears.

With a sharp sigh the Doctor drew the little lad to him, and pressed the curly head against his breast. It was with a deep misgiving that he was sending this child into a Training Home, where his future would be the responsibility of common guardians. Hitherto the boy's health had been such, that every care possible under the conditions of Socialist administration had been given him—the Doctor had seen to that. Part of his own care had been to develop and direct an unusually affectionate nature, but he knew that the ruling in a Training Home through the Socialist "each for all and all for each," policy would tend to arrest this develop-

John Bull : Socialist

ment, and he could only hope that as John grew older his nature would show itself sufficiently strong and free to remain unembittered by this fallacious treatment.

“There! that’s right,” said Comrade Elizabeth kindly as John’s sobs became less frequent; “be a good little boy and show how brave you can be. Why! what should we do if all the other little boys and girls cried when they went into a Training Home? You don’t want to be different from them.”

“But he *is* different,” said the Doctor in low tones, “and if we want a right development we must recognize this fact. My experience has shown me that there are fundamental differences in children. This is a child who should be in a home under the care of his own parents. He needs a father and will never—”

The Doctor was speaking softly, but young ears are sometimes sharp. “What is a father?” said little John Bull between his sobs.

CHAPTER II

“Comrade Elizabeth,” said the Doctor, one morning in September, “I have had a wire from Comrade Christopher Markham. He tells me that an epidemic has broken out in the surrounding districts, and that they are short of medical aid; he urges me to come. Do you think you can look after my little patients for a day or so. Comrade Helen Brown has just returned from her holiday, and if you should need any advice, call her in. There is really no reason why I should not take my holiday at once. Just tell Heinrich, please to put up my medical apparatus; and, wait! when you next see John in the Training Home, tell the little lad that I cannot come and see him this month.”

“Ah, he will break his heart over that,” said Comrade Elizabeth.

“Oh, no! I hope not,” said the Doctor.

John Bull : Socialist

“I think he is beginning to settle down. You see, he has been nearly a year in the Training Home. I am keeping a sharp eye on the boy’s health. I meant to have taken him for a short time to the sea, but this epidemic will prevent it ; we must think of something later on.”

The Doctor returned to his sanctum, and quietly turning the key of the door, he proceeded to unlock a drawer and take from it a small revolver, which he placed securely in a pocket made for the purpose. This was not the Doctor’s first experience of an epidemic. In a Socialist State, where there are no standing armies, police, or prisons, * a panic was apt to produce such serious consequences in the community that the Doctor considered any means legitimate which would coerce the workers into right action. Comrade Markham had punctuated his telegram with the word “serious,” and by this the Doctor understood that the officials were not equal to the difficulty confronting them.

“Good-bye,” he said to Comrade Elizabeth,

* See *Woman : Past, Present, and Future*, p. 212.

John Bull : Socialist

“don’t expect me until you see me. I may send for one or two of the senior students. If I do, send Comrades Harrison and Wilson. They were with me in the last epidemic ; I can trust them.”

It had been a long hot summer, but it seemed to the Doctor that this day would surely be remembered as the hottest day of the year. There was scarcely any breeze ; the air palpitated with the heat, and the Doctor felt, even in his cool linen coat, that he could hardly breathe. “This won’t do,” he said, “I must pull myself together. How thankful I shall be for the sea breezes.” He smiled as he realized that even in a Socialist State the spirit of thankfulness could still be exercised ; and his mind dwelt on a remark made by little John Bull, as nearly a year ago he bade him good-bye at the door of the Training Home : “I’m most miser’ble,” sobbed the child, “but when you think of me tomorrer I shall be a little ‘appier, and next day more ‘appier ‘cos it will be nearer you comin’ agen ; so I shant be miser’ble all the days,” he said, smiling through his tears.

John Bull : Socialist

When the Doctor reached the little seaport town, he went first to the Pension House in search of Comrade Markham. Immediately upon his entrance he was greeted with shrill cries of welcome from some of the inmates. "Why! where are the men comrades?" he said. "Where is Comrade Markham?"

"Out 'elpin'," said an elderly pensioner. "Comrade Markham 'e's bakin' bread; Comrade Dr. Finch 'e's 'elpin' the patients, and Comrade Nelson 'e's gone agitatin'."

"Agitating! at such a time as this," exclaimed the Doctor.

"Yes, 'e's been agitatin' for two days or more," said the pensioner "'e said it were; a fair chance—Fishals out o' the way."

"Where are the officials?" said the Doctor.

"Two of 'ems down with the fever and gone into hospital. The others gone to help at the Training Home—the little 'uns is ill. We got some of 'em 'ere," she said, pointing to a child with the fever-flush already on its little face.

"Why have you not taken that child to the fever hospital," said the Doctor sternly.

"Fever 'ospital ain't finished yet—workers

John Bull : Socialist

knocked off 'cos of the heat, and other 'ospitals full," said the pensioner.

"Put that child to bed at once," said the Doctor, "in a room by itself. One of you stay with it ; don't leave it for a minute. You can do that, Granny," he said, to an elderly pensioner whom he knew he could trust, "I will come in again later."

The Doctor hastened away in search of Comrade Markham, but on his way to the bakery, he was pulled up by a noisy crowd. In the middle of the crowd, balancing himself on an old beer-barrel, was a long-haired agitator gesticulating wildly—

"Comrades," he shouted, "'ere we are, all on us, dyin' like flies ; like flies I tell 'ee. And wy are we dyin' like flies I arsk 'ee. 'Cos they don't give us 'nough food and drink. 'Tis food and drink as keeps off fevers—food and drink I say ; I don't care 'oo says it ain't ! Then, comrades," he continued hoarsely, "git food and drink—git it where you can, afore fishals can stop 'ee. Now's the time ; go an—"

Before another word was out of his mouth the long-haired agitator found himself hurled

John Bull: Socialist

from the barrel, pushed roughly through the crowd, and finally pinned against a distant wall ; and before he could draw breath, or recover his senses, he felt the cold muzzle of a revolver pressed against his temple. "Look here, my man," said the low stern voice of the Doctor, "another word, and I will shoot you as I would a dog. You damned scoundrel," he exclaimed, relaxing his grip, "get back to the Pension House before I kick your carcase into the sea !"

The long-haired agitator, beginning to recover from this sudden ouslaught, slunk away as fast as his old limbs could carry him. It was not his first encounter with the Doctor, whom, he knew to be as good as his word ; and he was not easy in his mind until he had put a considerable distance between himself and this aggressive comrade.

The Doctor turned back to the crowd, and pushing his way through, he quickly mounted the barrel. "Comrades," he cried, his clear voice cutting through the still atmosphere, "listen to me ! Most of you know who I am—

"Yes ! yes ! comrade, we know yer ; we'll listen ! we'll listen ! Glad to see you ! "cried

John Bull: Socialist

several voices ; for the Doctor was a favourite in the little seaport town, and was always welcome. "That's right, comrades ; now hear me—all of you ! I have but a few minutes to spare and I want your help. We are facing that difficult experience, an epidemic. Several of the officials and many other comrades are down with the fever, and it will be as much as we can do to find enough medical and other requisites to tide us over. I am sending to my hospital for help, and I shall remain myself, and give all the assistance I can. Now, comrades," he continued, "*you* must face this difficulty too. We are thinking of turning one of the Co-operative Homes into a hospital ; some of you may have to sleep in the open ; but you won't mind that ! and if you don't get much butter to your bread for the next few weeks—we need all the milk for the patients—you won't mind that either !"

"Don't know so much about that Mister," said a pert feminine voice, which was quickly silenced by a gruff, "Shut up, you little fool, or I'll clout your head—"

"Now," continued the Doctor, "I want you

John Bull : Socialist

all to go quietly away. I shall look to you to keep order amongst yourselves ; and remember, comrades," he said pausing, "*remember*, you must work double time if production is to go on. You had better, at once, elect a foreman amongst yourselves to exercise the executive function for the time being. Put it to the vote in the usual way. You Comrade Robinson, and you, Taylor, come with me as I want your immediate help. Now I must go," he said, looking at his watch. "Good-bye, comrades, for the present."

"Three cheers for the Doctor," cried a voice, and the cheers were heartily given as the Doctor went hurriedly away waving his hat, and followed by the two men.

"I wonder," he said to himself as he hastened on, "if the workers will go on working ; I hope to God they will," and he sighed as his ear caught faintly the loud and furious arguments which attended the election of the foreman. "Now, comrades," said the Doctor turning to the two men, "I must first send a wire, and then I must see Dr. Winthrop at the hospital for a moment ; after that we will go to the

John Bull : Socialist

bakery and talk to Comrade Markham. Ah! here is the pharmacy," he said; "I will get some quinine."

"Can't let you have any quinine, comrade," said the chemist; "we are very short. Dr Winthrop has forbidden any more to be given out."

"Really!" said the Doctor, "this is very bad management. What am I to do?"

"It's no use talking! it's no use talking," said the chemist, so irritably that the Doctor gave him a quick professional glance.

"My friend," he said quietly, "you are ill; you should be out of this."

"Yes, I know," said the chemist excitedly, "but what can I do! There is no one to take my place; my assistant is in hospital, and I dare not trust anyone else. It's all very well saying that many of the workers have been partially educated as chemists, but I should like the Socialist leaders—every one of 'em—to have a dose made up by a bricklayer, or a baker, or a blacksmith. "It's damned rot! that's what it is," he exclaimed. "I won't be responsible for murders, so I must keep on till I drop!"

John Bull : Socialist

"Yes," said the Doctor gravely, "and then you will be responsible for a suicide. Now, look here," he said, "I will make you up a dose which you must take every two hours, and by twelve o'clock to-night I shall have someone to put in your place. Comrade Harrison from my hospital will—"

"Has he ever done any dispensing?" said the chemist anxiously.

"Of course!" said the Doctor smiling, "or I should not suggest him. Now listen!" he continued, "we are turning one of the Homes into a hospital, and to-night you shall be one of the first patients. Comrade Harrison will come and—"

"You think it's fever, then?" said the chemist hurriedly.

"I am sure of it," said the Doctor; "but we shall get you through all right. Just keep as quiet as you can until I send for you."

"Ah!" said the chemist with a sigh of relief, "I can get on now. Two of the officials were in a short time ago, and they said it would be a flagrant breach of Socialist teaching if I gave way—quite inhuman, they said. They

John Bull : Socialist

kept on repeating 'the needs of the people, the needs of the people,' till my head was in a whirl."

"Yes," said the Doctor dryly, "the officials are rather upset; perhaps it is the heat. But now, I must get on, there is much to arrange. Good-bye for the present," he said cheerfully. "Don't worry, you will be all right."

The Doctor made a short call on Dr. Winthrop at the hospital, who was so over-worked that he could only spare a few minutes to give thankful approval to the Doctor's arrangement; and then he and his two comrades found their way to the bakery where Comrade Markham, as the pensioner had told him, was bakin' bread. "Why Markham," said the Doctor, as he caught sight of his friend with shirt-sleeves rolled to his shoulders and great drops of perspiration streaming down his face, "how long have you been at this work?"

"For the last two days, and I may say nights," said Comrade Markham. "The Executive and several of the workers are in hospital . . . Who have you got here? Is that you, Robinson?" he said suspiciously; for the last time he caught sight of Comrade Robinson the man was talking

John Bull : Socialist

to the agitator and showing some signs of sympathy.

"It's all right!" said the Doctor in a low voice, "I have brought him to take your place. I have made terms with these men; you can trust them to work; I will tell you later. Taylor is going to take the management of the dairy department—the executives and several of the workers are down with the fever. He was once on a farm, and is a most intelligent worker—it's the best we can do. I sincerely trust they will not have fever. The worst of it is, I cannot get any quinine."

"Ah," said Comrade Markham, busily kneading his dough, "can't—get—any—quinine; but what has become of the Socialist teaching;" and he repeated rapidly. "It will be the duty of the executive bodies to provide stores of all the requisites of life sufficient to satisfy the needs of all.* Eh! what has become of that?"

"Have you got the quinine?" said the Doctor eagerly, as he met Comrades Harrison and

* Woman : Past, Present and Future, p. 223

John Bull : Socialist

Wilson at the station late that evening. "Ah! that's right," he said with a sigh of relief as Comrade Harrison placed the parcel in his hands. "Where did you get it?"

"Well, as luck would have it," said Harrison, "a small consignment arrived just as we were leaving. I tried to worry the officials into letting us have some, and while I engaged their attention, Wilson took what he could get and we made off. The officials told me that the Peruvian agents are complaining that our 'Home products,' sent in exchange are of a very inferior quality. They say the workmanship is a disgrace to even a Socialist State, and that in future they prefer to have no further dealings with us unless we can give the 'exchange value' in gold; so I expect," he said cheerfully—life was only just beginning for Comrade Harrison—"we doctors shall have to drop a little of our financial emolument."

"Yes, I suppose so," said the Doctor. "Now, Harrison," he continued, "I want you to take charge of the dispensing in the pharmacy; you, Wilson, must be my right hand in the smaller hospital. It's a rough

John Bull : Socialist

business, but the best we can do. I am glad to say I was able to get a few of the women workers, who have been partially trained as nurses, and one or two from the Pension House, so I think we shall get on," said the Doctor, with an involuntary yawn.

"Look here, comrade," said Harrison, scrutinizing the Doctor's face in the moonlight, "you had better get some rest, or I won't answer for the consequences—we can't spare you, you know."

"Nonsense!" said the Doctor smiling, "it is only the heat. There is no rest for any of us to-night; let us remember that, boys," he said in his kindly voice. "I will just smoke a pipe with Markham in the Pension House garden before I go into hospital for the night—that will rest me. But hark!" he said with a sudden start, as a distant rasping voice struck on his ear, "what is that?"

"By Jove! what are all these people doing," exclaimed Comrade Wilson; "they ought to be in the Co-operative Homes at this time of night. Why are they here?"

It suddenly flashed on the Doctor. "Well

John Bull: Socialist

I'm damned!" he said under his breath, "if it's not that infernal agitator again; I know I shall murder him! . . . Now, boys," he said, "keep steady; we must disperse this crowd. Follow me!"

"But what does it all mean," said Wilson, who was beginning to enjoy himself.

"It has a very serious meaning," said the Doctor. "Listen for a moment and you will understand."

The little agitator, his long locks shining in the light of the moon, was gesticulating in the same wild manner, and urging his listeners to "get wot they could, w'en they could, etc." His words were continually punctuated with "'ear, 'ear," from the crowd, and the Doctor saw that unless something was done immediately there would be serious trouble, and he was not prepared, under present circumstances, to meet any difficulty which by determined action could be avoided. "Follow me," he said sharply to the students; "do exactly as I tell you," and quietly skirting the crowd he came up behind the agitator and, for the second time that day, hurled him from the barrel into the arms of the

John Bull : Socialist

students. "Hold him firmly," said the Doctor, involuntarily smiling as he noted Wilson's clutch, "while I address the crowd;" and mounting the barrel, he waited until cheers, which always greeted his advent, had died away.

"Comrades," said the Doctor sternly, and Wilson noted that his hands were clenched, and that one was continually moving towards a certain pocket, "is this the way you keep a promise, made to me only this morning? Understand me! I mean what I say; unless we doctors and the officials have your help, we cannot face this epidemic. Comrade Dr. Winthrop and I have worked all day, and we shall work all night while you are sleeping peacefully—" ("Yah! yah! 'Ear! 'ear!" came from the crowd). "Think for a moment," continued the Doctor, "this is my holiday—the only holiday I shall get this year, and every day and most of the nights will be filled with anxious work; and remember this, comrades! some of you may be down with the fever presently, and it is to me you will look for help; it is to my tender mercies you must come.

John Bull : Socialist

You seem to forget that, in a Socialist State, the doctor is the last administrator."

"That's so! that so! 'e do speak sensible," said a voice. "Hear! hear!" said another voice, which was taken up by the crowd, and finally ended in a burst of cheering.

"That's right," said the Doctor, still sternly. "Now, comrades, go quietly away and get to rest as soon as possible, there is so much to be done to-morrow ;" and turning from the crowd he made a sign to Harrison to follow him. "Now," he said determinedly, "we must lock up this agitator. You and Wilson take him back to the Pension House. Wilson must keep guard over him until I settle with Markham what shall be done. I shall see you again before long," and the Doctor hastened away to the Pension House garden, where he found Comrade Markham awaiting him.

"Well," said the Barrister, "I hear you have been troubled with the agitator again ; we must get rid of him."

"Yes! I have thought of a plan," said the Doctor. "There are several vacancies in the Pension House in my town. We might send

John Bull: Socialist

the agitator up with Robinson, by the six o'clock express, if you will take on the bakery for another day. There are so many officials in the Pension House that he can be constantly shadowed and will do little harm; besides, they are chiefly Majority citizens in my town. It is when these agitators get amongst the Minority that they become dangerous. Why! what do you think the old scoundrel did. Robinson caught him at it, and came and told me—he actually advised the workers, who are sleeping in the open to-night, to fire the corn in the west valley. I shall indeed be thankful to get rid of him; but the Socialist leaders must finally deal with him—he is their creation. What a comfort a pipe is,” said the Doctor, “I feel rested already.”

“Don't you think,” said the Barrister, “that it is a little dangerous to send Robinson with the agitator; he may come under his influence. I have seen them several times lately in conversation.”

“Oh, no!” said the Doctor, “I have settled all that. I have promised Robinson and Taylor that, if they will give me every possible

John Bull : Socialist

help during the next six weeks, I will find the means for them to leave the country. Both the men have been wishing this for years, and they are such excellent workers that, with the credentials I am able to give them, any English speaking country will be glad to have them."

"Well," said the Barrister smiling, "do you think that the action of a good Socialist?"

"Most certainly I do!" replied the Doctor. "I remain in this country because I gave my vote to the Socialist cause, a man must serve where he 'listed, but it is different with Robinson and Taylor. Through no fault of their own, they were born in a Socialist State; and since the Government has removed all facilities for emigration, which was quite necessary if the workers are to remain in the country, Robinson and Taylor, unless someone give them help, are bound to remain under Socialist rule There is no more subtle form of slavery," continued the Doctor, "than that contained in the teachings of Socialism. At no point in a man's life can he count upon freedom, and as for the woman—well, you know what she suffers."

John Bull : Socialist

“ I do indeed ! ” said the Barrister. “ Many and many a time have I pointed out to the officials the present condition of women ; but they only look anxious or begin to bluff, and they say it is greatly the women’s own fault.”

“ Of course ! of course ! ” exclaimed the Doctor, “ what else can you expect. I met Winthrop this evening, just outside the hospital ; we were talking of this difficulty, and he says the Medical Faculty must get up an initiative with regard to the condition of women. He has already framed a bill. He says many of the women are terribly overworked. They are terrorised by the men ; and it is all done so quietly that it is almost impossible to detect the delinquents.”

“ I could put my finger on half a dozen,” said the Barrister quietly. “ If I had my way they would be strung up.”

“ Ah, we have got away from all that,” said the Doctor ; “ but if there was ever a time when capital punishment should again come into force, it is in a Socialist State. These brutes should be terrorised as they terrorise the women. I have told Winthrop that, later

John Bull: Socialist

on I will give all my spare time to his initiative. The Government will be compelled to consider the weight of the entire Medical Faculty."

"It will indeed," said the Barrister smiling. "I wish we could bring the weight of the entire Medical Faculty to bear upon the executives of the Management of Productive Processes. There will be very little Administration of Things this winter, unless some compelling force can be brought to bear upon the workers. Why! the corn is still standing in the western district."

"Yes, I noticed that as I came through the west valley," said the Doctor, "it is over-ripe. I know something of crops. My father was an extensive wheat-grower, so I had the curiosity to examine the ear; it must have come from a thin and weak plant."

"Yes," said the Barrister, "just at the time the workers should have been harrowing, there was a strike amongst them, owing to the fact that their allowance of tobacco had necessarily been cut off. The more intelligent workers were against this strike, but of course a majority vote carried—it was enforced by the

John Bull : Socialist

weight of many fists. I greatly fear another famine this winter. Of all the grain, peas and beans, which is one of our staple foods, will be the most injured. It is so important, especially by the sea, that it should be well stored, and the workers are getting more and more out of hand. I suppose this epidemic has demoralized them."

"It is another form of infectious disease that has demoralized them," said the Doctor. "Happily, we have now isolated it. No, I must not refill my pipe; I must go and free Wilson as I need him in the hospital. Will you give an eye to the agitator occasionally. He is securely locked in, but—well, you never can tell," said the Doctor, as he hastened away.

Six weeks later, in the twilight of an autumn afternoon, as Comrade Elizabeth, duster in hand, entered the doctors' sanctum to see that it was properly kept, she was startled to find a gaunt figure, seated in an arm-chair by the window, with its face buried in its hands.

"Comrade Elizabeth," said the Doctor rising

John Bull : Socialist

and holding out his hand, "I have worked almost unceasingly night and day, and I have lost over two hundred patients How is little John Bull ?"

CHAPTER III

JOHN BULL fought his way through the Training Home in the usual manner of the Socialist child until the time arrived for his entrance into the special or technical school, where the first principles of his future craft would be taught him by sympathetic teachers of either or both sexes.* The choice of a craft had not exercised the mind of John Bull for any length of time, as like all other boys and girls in the Socialist State he had decided to become a doctor; but when his decision was placed before the officials the boy was firmly told that the State was not in need of his future services as a member of the Medical Faculty—he must choose elsewhere.

“Why shouldn’t the boy become a doctor?” said Comrade Bryce. “He is most intelligent;

* The Woman Socialist, p. 81.

John Bull : Socialist

I should like to train him myself later on. He could come into my hospital."

"No," said the officials firmly, "the Government has decided to lessen the number of doctors in the State ; we have too many."

"Too many!" exclaimed the Doctor. "Why, we are worked to death as it is. The Medical Faculty is now getting up an initiative with regard to this overwork. A Bill is already framed showing the absolute necessity for a larger staff of qualified men and women, and we have pointed out that unless this initiative has the immediate attention of the Government, we, as the Medical Faculty, will not be answerable for the consequences."

"Well, comrade," said a senior official, "you may put it in that way if you please ; but, as a matter of fact, the Medical Faculty *is* answerable for the consequences. The Medical Faculty has only to give up its financial emolument, and so free the country from a burden and oppression which should never have been permitted by the Socialist Government."

The Doctor turned suddenly white ; his clear, logical brain recoiled. "Burden and op-

John Bull : Socialist

pression!" he exclaimed, "and you place the burden and oppression of this misgoverned and most miserable country as the responsibility of the Medical Faculty. Where is your sense of that 'equality' upon which this State is said to be built up?—that Socialist teaching which declares 'that all are equal and enjoy equal rights.'* Now, I ask you, what are the rights of the doctor in a Socialist State? The right to work from morning till night—aye! and often through the night; the right in times of crises to have forced upon him responsible action, which action shall safeguard the needs of the people; the right as 'arbiter' between life and death to hold a position in the community which must bring with it a never-ceasing anxiety, for, as you officials all know," said the Doctor, "any referendum, placed through the initiative of the Medical Faculty—which initiative is often pressed upon us by a section of the community—is now invariably carried by a majority vote; and at times this responsibility weighs heavily upon us. Think

* Women : Past, Present, and Future, p. 199.

John Bull : Socialist

for a moment! Where in all the Socialist State is there another citizen who works as we do? You know there is none, and yet you wish to dock us of the miserable pittance which you call a financial emolument. . . . Understand this, comrades," said the Doctor sternly, "the Medical Faculty has declined and will continue to decline, any alteration in this bargain—you force me to speak of it as such—with the Socialist Government."

"Well, well, comrade," said the official deprecatingly, "you need not be so vehement; surely, it is hardly—"

"Vehement!" exclaimed the Doctor, "vehement! Well, good-morning!"

"Ah," said Comrade Bryce to himself as he went away, "it takes—well, a doctor not to have his spirit broken in this cursed State!"

Comrade Bryce, in this interview with the officials, had not considered it necessary to remind them that the larger portion of the financial emolument received by the Medical Faculty was expended in the interests of the State. At one of their council meetings—always held behind closed and guarded doors—

John Bull : Socialist

a resolution was passed to the effect that in consideration of the scarcity of medical requisites, due to the inferiority of Socialist "Exchange value" when dealing with foreign lands, a certain sum should be placed each year for the purchase of these requisites, which would then remain under the entire control of the Medical Faculty. Neither did Comrade Bryce mention that his own hard-earned holiday, usually spent abroad, was taken up in the practical study of any new contribution to medical science in the hope that, should this contribution meet with the approval of his colleagues, it might be possible to introduce it into the Socialist hospitals. This attitude of reserve towards the officials was due to the fact that the feeling between the Socialist Government and the Medical Faculty was so strained that its members declined to discuss their affairs with any citizen who was not within the fraternity.

John Bull, having been finally informed that a superfluity of workers had "occurred" in the medical branch of the Social labour, and that his services in this branch would not be required,

John Bull: Socialist

began to wonder what craft he should choose in order to become a productive worker in the State. He was now a tall, slim lad, shy in manner, and with an attitude of reserve which did not meet with the approval of the "sympathetic teachers" in the Technical School—with them he was no favourite. As a young child, when first in the Training Home, John fought his comrades with all the vigour necessary to the assertion of his "claim;" but as he grew older he learned to express himself in words rather than with his fists, and this placed him outside the interest of the majority of his comrades. The Technical School came as a relief, and he finally decided to enter the Agricultural Department and study the system of corn-growing upon "scientific principles." This would, in the future, keep him much in the open air and place a desirable distance between himself and his comrades. The Co-operative Home, with its "common table," one "pleasant tea garden," and continual bickerings, loomed before him; and young as he was, he felt the necessity for securing certain intervals when he would be

John Bull : Socialist

"alone and free," and where the compulsory interdependence of the Socialist teaching would weigh less heavily on his young soul. There were times when John felt that he hated his species.

Comrade Bryce had taken a practical part in John's education, and it was through this influence that the boy had studied with an interest beyond his years the workings of a Socialist State. Very little past history was taught in the schools, and when it was found necessary to make some allusion to pre-Socialist times they were spoken of as the "dark ages"* and accounted "strange reading."† Curiously enough this "strange reading" had a fascination for John, and many a half-holiday, under pretext of ill-health, was spent in the Doctor's sanctum poring over several little red volumes which were a literary product of the "dark ages." Comrade Bryce was careful to place before John—and to see that he well understood,—all teaching with regard to

* The Woman Socialist, p. 17.

† p. 17.

John Bull : Socialist

Socialist Rule necessary to his becoming a good worker in the State. This teaching was part of the training of every Socialist child, but John felt he could learn more easily from Dr. Bryce than from the teachers in the Training School. In these schools an "educator" without distinction of sex* was provided for every group of "ten children," but this "educator" was frequently changed, having "alternating duties"† in several branches of the Social labour; and John found it very difficult to accept the Socialist teaching that "one represents all and all one."‡ He was very sensitive to the atmosphere of others, and having with difficulty accustomed himself to the peculiar nasal twang and spasmodic irritability of one educator, it was with a feeling of revolt that he had to begin all over again with the nervous barking cough of another; and so on. To John these "educators" were individual, and so did not awake in him "that

* Woman: Past, Present and Future, p. 184.

† Ibid., p. 183.

‡ Ibid., p. 184.

John Bull : Socialist

spirit of cheerful activity," which the Socialist sense of "solidarity" is expected to call forth. However, his intelligence and natural desire for knowledge carried him over many difficulties, and he went through the experience of the Technical Schools to the satisfaction, though not with the sympathy, of his teachers, and was finally launched as a productive worker in the State.

John's entrance into the Co-operative Home was the most trying experience that had yet befallen him. A certain apathy towards his fellow creatures had gradually grown up in his mind, yet the fact that he was continually bound to them by an ever recurring "claim" kept him on the *qui vive* as to the next move of his neighbour. The one bright spot in John's life was his increasing respect and affection for the Doctor. This affection had now taken root in his intelligence, and so had gained an emotional quality, which drew from him his best efforts in order that he might merit his friend's approval; and it was due to the advice of Comrade Bryce, that John, finding himself at his first meal in the Co-operative Home and

John Bull : Socialist

surrounded by numberless strange faces, made a fierce effort to free himself from a sudden fit of shyness, which threatened to seal his lips.

“Dod, laddie, ye’re no ettin’ nothin’,” said a soft voice at his side.

“No,” said John, “I was wondering what the comrades at the other table were talking about.”

“Oh, that’s Comrade William Sykes, you sud just hear him; it’s fair interestin’. Go and sit at the end of yon table, laddie. He’ll tell you how his father left him a wee bit cottage and ten shillun a week before Socialism come in.”

The face of Comrade William Sykes had attracted John’s attention directly he entered the Co-operative Home. There was a certain good-natured astuteness under the combative expression, which caught John’s fancy; and it was with a feeling of interest—which as he listened deepened into sympathy—that he placed himself within hearing distance of this determined looking comrade.

“Well, as I was a-sayin’,” said Comrade Sykes; “but that there lad at end of table

John Bull : Socialist

'ave missed it, so I'll say it o'er agin—W'en I was a lad (this quickened John's interest) me father was as 'ard a worker as ever you did see; 'e did work mornin', noon, an' night, an' 'e 'cumulated quite a sum of money, but 'e niver telled me nothin'—'e kep' it dark like. I can scarce remember me mother, she died w'en I were a little 'un. Sometimes father e'd look at me—I mind it well—an' e'd say: You be jist like yer mother allus a-trapesin' and a-trapesin', you'll niver do a day's work so long as you do live!' Howsumever I did do a day's work—well—to be c'rect, it were a night's work; and the next thing I knowed, I were doin' two stretch—they planked me inter quod and I niver saw me father agin. Well, afore I cum out, the screw give me a letter wrote to me by me father, an' w'en I'd read it I were quite staggered like. It went like this—'Dear Son,' it said, 'I be a-dyin' an' I shant niver see you agin, but I be 'sponsible for yer existence, an' I've lef' you the cottage an' ten shillun a week fer life. I knowed you would niver do a day's work; but I chose yer mother, an' I've made it so's you

John Bull : Socialist

need niver disgrace yer faither's name agin.' 'That's all 'e said, but it were a lot ter me, and I looked forra'd to the day w'en I should come out o' quod an' live like a toff, wi' no worrit fer vittals. Well, the day arrove, and as I cum out two 'fishals cum up—'fishals like we 'as 'ere—an' shook me 'and; an' one of 'em ses, 'Comrade Willum Sykes, 'e ses, we be glad to open yer prissen doors. Come out 'an work!' Well, I can tell 'ee that did give me a turn, but I ups wi' me answer: 'Wurk, I ses, wurk; 'oo be you a-gettin' at?'

"'Ah, Comrade,' they ses, a smilin' like, 'you don't unnerstan'. Great things 'ave 'appened while you been be'ind them doors.'

"'They 'ave,' I ses.

"'We all works now; not fer long, nor wery 'ard. We divide it up like, so's to make it easy.'

"'Well,' I ses, 'this bloke wont do none o' yer diwidin'. P'raps you done no', 'I ses, that me faither 'ave lef' me a cottage an' ten shillun a week fer me life! That done look much like workin', do ut?'

"'Ah,' they ses, still a-smilin', an' one of 'em

John Bull : Socialist

got red i' the face, 'you 'avent got no cottage now, the State have bought it up.'

“ ‘W'ot do 'ee mean! I ses, an' me fistes begun to work back'ards and for'ards. 'Who've nicked it?' ”

“ ‘Well,' they ses, 'you must try and unnerstan', Comrade Willum Sykes.' They ses, 'You see, things is all changed. You now live in a Sosherlist State, ware we all shares alike, 'an things is ekal.' ”

“ ‘Ekal or no ekal,' I ses; 'ware I be goin' to live is in me own cottage on me own ten shillun' a week, an' I wants to git there; so you jest let me cum by' I ses, 'or I'll bash yer 'ead!' ”

“ ‘Comrade Sykes,' they ses in a 'urry like, 'ere be your prom'sry notes wot the State 'ave give you for your cottage,' and they puts two bits o' paper inter me 'and—I got them bits o' paper still—'an they begun a-talkin' wery quick. They ses: 'We don't live in cottages now, we lives in Co-operative 'Omes; an' we all does sum work every day, an' we 'as our meals reglar an' sure, an' there aint no kings nor dooks nor hearls—on'y people; an' there aint no perlice or prissens—' ”

John Bull: Socialist

“‘Ah-a-a,’ I ses, ‘*now we’re movin’*. So that’s w’y you’ve took me cottage, is it? You aint a-feared o’ bein’ locked up, you theivin’ raskills!’ I ses; ‘an’ as for meals reglar, ’oo wouldn’t ’ave their meals reglar if they do work for ’em. Wot I do want is to ’ave me meals reglar wi’out workin’. Me faither ’e did work fer two, an’ I be one o’ em. ’E knowed as I would niver work, an’ ’e lef—’

“‘Ah,’ they ses, ‘but you’ll work now. Things is diffrent, an’ you’ll like it.’

“‘Garn!’ I ses, fer me blood was up, stow yer gammon an’ give ’eed ter me. If wot you two blokes ’ave been a-sayin’ is a fair truth, an’ my cottage an’ ten shillun a week be stole away, I can tell ee this—I’ll niver do a stroke o’ work s’ long as I do live, s’elp me Gawd; an’ I’ll see to ’t I ’aves me meals reglar. Wot! I ses, ‘no perlice! no prissens! And I doubles up a-larfin’ W’y you could ’out a man, ware there aint no rossers about. ’Oo’s to stop ’ee?’

“‘Now, my man,’ they ses, an’ they stop a-smilin’, “that’ll do. Cum an’ ’ave some dinner at one of the Co-operative ’Omes—you looks ’ungry.”

John Bull : Socialist

“ ‘ Now you’re talkin, I ses, for I was gitting a bit wore an’ fainty like, ‘ but take ‘eed to wot I bin a-sayin’. William Sykes is one as do keep is word ; an’ let that there dinner be a good ‘un, I ses. Wi’ ten shillun a week an’ a cottage I could git me meals reglar an’—’ ”

“ And have you never done any work ? ” said John, who had come close up to Comrade Sykes and was listening breathlessly. “ Were you able to keep to that ? ”

“ Ne’er a ‘our’s work since I lef’ them prissen doors, me lad, an’ I ‘aves me meals reglar—sich as they be o’ course ! Wi’ a cottage an’ ten shillun a week I could get—”

“ Dear me ! dear me ! there is a great deal of noise here,” said one of the officials coming hastily up ; “ not at all a good example for a noo-comer. It do surprise me, Comrade Sykes, that you—”

“ Quit bletherin, yer stoopid fool ! ” said the Comrade.

The official turned to John. “ I should like to have a word with you,” he said, and John followed him to the other end of the room.

“ Don’t take no ‘eed of what that old—I mean,

John Bull : Socialist

Comrade Sykes, do say ” said the official. “ ’E aint right in ’is ’ead—quite ’armless! quite ’armless; but ’e do cause a lot of trouble. We think of makin’ ’im a pensioner.”

“ But surely,” said John, “ he’s not old enough yet.”

“ I’m not so sure about that,” said the official. “ Comrade Sykes ’e don’t rightly know ’is age; and we think e’d be better in a Pension ’ouse.”

“ But he wont like it,” said John; “ he’ll say it’s not according to his needs.”

“ Ah, that don’t matter, that don’t matter,” said the official. “ Comrade Sykes ’eve never contribooted nothing to the State, and—”

“ But I suppose he couldn’t,” said John, “ if he’s not right in his head.”

“ That’s it, that’s it, of course,” said the official hastily; “ but Comrade Sykes ’e do eat a lot, and we ’lowance ’em in the Pension ’Ouse. We can’t in the Co-operative Omes—workers won’t stand it.”

However, in spite of the ill-balanced condition of the head of Comrade Sykes, it was sufficiently clear to note that Comrade John

John Bull : Socialist

Bull was above the average Socialist citizen, and in spite having done a "night's work" in days gone by, this comrade, who was not right in his head, had a straight outlook, and was able to call things by their right names, which made him difficult to deal with in a Socialist State. He was disliked and feared by the officials, which caused him much quiet merriment, and he played up to this antagonism to such an extent that there were frequent and loud quarrels in the Co-operative Home. As to becoming a pensioner, he flatly declined anything of the sort ; and when it was put to the vote, his remaining as an inmate was carried by a large majority—"Sykes an' 'Fishals goin' it" being one of the chief amusements of the Co-operative Home.

"Now, me lad," he said to John, "you beware o' them 'fishals—copper's narks I calls em,' an' you cant go nowheres but they cums a-follerin'—reglar splits they be ; an' if yer gits inter any trubble, you jest cum ter comrade Willum Sykes. 'E knows a thing or two ; 'e aint lived in a Sosherlist State fer nothin'—we be all thieves 'ere."

John Bull : Socialist

"Oh no! I hope not," said John.

"Well, we be. God A'mighty made a man to stand up in 'is own shoes, not in 'is neighbors; an' w'en 'fishal do say as yer shant 'ave more reward w'en you've got more brains,' e's -tryin ter make yer stand up in yer neighbour's shoes wot don't fit yer, an' 'es a-thievin' from yer wot, yer oughter 'ave."

"Well, you see," said John, "the rule of the Socialist State is 'all to be equal.'"

"Yus, but it aint the rule o' nature, an' she've lived longer, an' 'ad more esperience nor a Sosherlist State; an' sum o' these days, sure's death, she'll give them Sosherlists sich a slap i' the face as they won't know therselves no more."

"Yes," said John, "Comrade Bryce says the State can't last much longer."

"Ay, 'an' 'e do say right," said Comrade Sykes. "I be lookin' forrard to the day w'en summat 'll 'appen as 'll break us all up. The Devil ne'er 'ad sich a game in 'is life as 'e's 'avin' in this Sosherlist State. I doubt but 'e'll remimber it all the rest o' 'is days."

John Bull : Socialist

“Yes,” said John smiling, “but we don’t believe in a devil now—that’s all a myth.”

“I dunno wot ’e do mean by a myth,” said Comrade Sykes, “but all I ses is, I’ve ’eard ’is tail a-swishin’ around too often not ter believe in ’im.”

John began to understand why the official declared that Comrade William Sykes was not right in his head.

CHAPTER IV

ONE morning, several years later, as the Doctor was looking through his papers preparatory to taking up his residence as a pensioner, he came upon a letter received from Comrade Christopher Markham shortly after the epidemic in the little seaport town. "Dear Bryce," said the letter, "within a few hours of receipt of this I shall be in your sanctum bidding you farewell, for I am about to leave this damned country. Ever since I realized the walls of the prison-house closing in upon me, I have had this end in view ; and although I have not a single friend abroad, it will shortly be an accomplished fact. Now for the point ! From the first day I became a pensioner I set to work 'and writ, and writ and writ,' with the result that I am now that cursed thing, a Capitalist—quite in a small way

John Bull : Socialist

of course. In spite of my sixty-eight years I have been taken on the staff of the 'Boston Gramophone' as a writer of articles; but my first literary effort was a book entitled 'Collectivism Astray,' which was published in New York, and had such a large sale that the shekels came tumbling in. Think of it! At this late hour, *I live, I breathe, I move*—God be thanked! Yours, till we meet, Christopher Markham.

"Ah," said the Doctor, as he carefully sealed up the letter, "that is the sort of thing that makes one still believe in the possibilities of human nature. Many a man would have been cowed by Markham's experience," and he sighed as he locked the bureau, which was going with him into the Pension House. For the Doctor's duties were not yet over. In consideration of the financial emolument given by the State, the members of the Medical Faculty were expected to give further service when they entered the Pension House, and to look after the medical needs of the inmates. In return for this they were allowed the use of a small room—a point upon which the Medical

John Bull : Socialist

Faculty had insisted—but, in every other way, they lived under rules placed by the State as suitable to a Pension House, while procuring that “equality” in which “one represents all and all one.”

Comrade Bryce was to take the place of Comrade Dr. Finch, lately deceased, in the Pension House of the little seaport town, and it pleased him to feel that his lot would not be cast amongst entire strangers. It pleased him also that Comrade Heinrich was shortly to follow him. As a boy the Doctor had spent some years in Germany, and so was able to converse with Heinrich in his own tongue. A sense of companionship had grown up between them, and Heinrich was looking forward to spending most of his time in the Doctor’s room looking out over the sea in the direction of his beloved Fatherland. “Things might have been worse,” said the Doctor to himself, for—

“A friend to see you, comrade,” said an official, as he suddenly opened the door.

“A friend!” exclaimed the Doctor, turning quickly, “who can that be? Why—”

“Don’t you know me, sir,” said a pleasant

John Bull : Socialist

voice, and an alert, upright figure entered the room, shedding around him so vital an atmosphere that the Doctor felt his own youthful energy returning.

"Ah, I see you don't strike me," said the stranger. "I'm little Jim Smithson."

"Jim Smithson!" exclaimed the Doctor, "why, Jim Smithson was my father's agent. Surely you are not his little lad?"

"That same, sir, I may say, with the addition of years," and he pointed laughingly to his grizzling locks.

"Why, Jim, how you have grown," said the Doctor, who could not get over his surprise.

"Grown in many ways, thanks to you, sir. My father and I, we calculate that all our prosperity is due to you."

"To me!" exclaimed the Doctor, for he had forgotten.

"See here, friend," said the American, "don't you remember how you lent my father enough money to get out of the country when Socialism first came in. Well, my father and I, we've nursed that little bit of money, and

John Bull : Socialist

it's grown into quite a tidy sum, ready for you whenever you want it, sir."

"Well," said the Doctor, "I had forgotten all about it. I am most thankful; I shall need it later. The State cannot last much longer, for you know—"

"Ah, we know all about that the other side of the 'pond' much better than you do here, sir; that's why my father sent me over. It won't be to-morrow or next day, but it's comin', and I can see the officials are quite unprepared; but it's not my place to say anything. 'See here, Jim,' said my father when I came away, 'keep a tight tongue in your head.' And so I have; but I've kept my eyes open, and I've learnt a thing or two about the workings of a Socialist State. Why, it couldn't last, sir! It doesn't express a man!"

"Of course not," said the Doctor. "How can it when the freedom of choice is left out? But I expect you know all about Socialism; no doubt your father has told you."

"Not he! He won't speak of it; and if I so much as mention the word, he says, 'Quit talkin', Jim, if that's your only subject.' But I

John Bull: Socialist

hope I'm not interruptin' you, friend," said the American. "Perhaps you—"

"Not at all," said the Doctor, "I'm most pleased to see you. I shall be very glad to have a talk. Come and sit over here by the window. It is indeed a pleasant change to meet someone who comes from entirely different surroundings. And so your father won't talk about Socialism?"

"Not a word, sir; but my mother says it is because he felt so deeply leaving his country in the hands of those brigands, as he calls them. You see, he loved his home, small as it was. The cottage was built by his father, and it was the home he brought my mother to when they were first married. I often wonder—I can't understand," said the American, "why the people who wished to be Socialists didn't find some tract of waste land and build up this 'new community,' as they call it, 'on their own.' "

"Ah," said the Doctor, smiling, "that, according to their point of view, is exactly what they did. They often spoke of the old or pre-Socialist society as 'waste' land, and

John Bull : Socialist

when the Socialists captured the Government their resulting action (through a peculiar twist of the imagination, which it would take me too long to explain) was called the 'expropriation of the expropriators,' by the right of 'the public welfare.'* You see, 'without a developed, large industry, Socialism is impossible,'† for 'at first the new society will carry on production with the means received from the old.'‡ That is why this country was chosen for Socialist spoliation; its industrial position was such as to fulfil all conditions necessary to the scheme of Socialism."

"Well, sir, as I told you, I've not given much study to this teaching—it don't go down the other side of the 'pond'—so I can't quite follow all you say; but I've looked round a bit since I landed, and I never saw so many officials in my life; and as for the workers, well, if this isn't slavery, I don't know what slavery means! The poor beggars fight one

* Woman : Past, Present and Future, p. 178.

† On the Morrow of the Social Revolution, p. 21.

‡ Woman : Past, Present and Future, p. 186.

John Bull : Socialist

another like cat and dog. There's no one to restrain them, and seemingly they can't restrain themselves."

"Of course not," said the Doctor, "and until a man can do this he should be under legal compulsion. That higher attitude, an inner compulsion, is not yet for all of us, and until we were more developed on these lines, the Socialists had no right to claim a form of civilisation for which we are not, or indeed, ever shall be fitted. By so doing, they have arrested that very development which might further the cause of a true Socialism—a Socialism which does not include the 'equality' principle as represented by this new community."

"That's so, sir, and I fancy some of the officials are beginning to see this. I was sayin' to one of them only this mornin' I had never seen such fightin' and quarrelin' on a public foot-way in my life. It reminded me of some parts of Frisco when I was a lad."

"I don't wonder," said the Doctor. "You see this compulsory interdependence which is the backbone of a Socialist State gives rise to continual antagonism. Before Socialism be-

John Bull : Socialist

came a practical policy, this interdependence was claimed as an 'enlightened selfishness' which serves itself by serving the common interest;* but these astute Socialist teachers did not press the fact that through this very interdependence the 'narrow selfishness of the 'dark ages' would show itself as an individual claim to be extorted, if necessary, by the weight of a heavy fist. This continually happens in the community.

"Yes! There were two men fightin' just outside the door as I came in; and between ourselves, sir, one of 'em was in liquor. It didn't look much like Socialism. And there's another thing that has struck me, and that is your State care of children—my father will laugh when I tell him. Why, the other day I was speaking to an official who held a pretty little girl by the hand—she made me think of my little Rose at home—and I asked him if that was his child. 'Oh no,' he said, "'property in children" has long "ceased to exist." She belongs to the State; she is just going into a Training

* A New Catechism of Socialism, p. 30.

John Bull: Socialist

Home.' You d—d, I was beginning, when I suddenly remembered my father's advice."

"That was well," said the Doctor, smiling, "but it must, indeed, seem strange to you. This lack of family life is most deplorable in its far-reaching effects. The love of parent and child is engrafted in human nature, and it is the inherent tenderness and purity of this form of love that gives to other forms of love qualities which make for their higher developments. I can hardly express to you how low some of these poor men have fallen, who, while fathers, are yet denied the care, the trouble, the joy, the happiness, which comes through the little child. Many of these men are completely brutalized; and as for the women—well—"

"Ah, poor things! I've seen something of that even in this short time. I don't wonder the workers are so keen to get out of the country. The officials tell me that their numbers get less and less every year."

"Yes, that is so," said the Doctor; "but you see, only those who have property abroad, or whose intelligence and capacity is such that

John Bull : Socialist

any country would be glad of their services, can go. The majority of the workers must remain. A citizen of a Socialist State is only received by other countries on the terms I have given."

"Ah," said the American, "then my father was right. He always said it was the British working-man who would foot the bill of Socialism; but I'm afraid I'm tiring you, friend," he said, noting the worn look on the Doctor's face.

"Not at all; it is a relief to talk to someone who is not a comrade," said the Doctor. "Tell me something about yourself. How have you been getting on out there?"

"Well, sir, my father and I, we think we've done very well. We are what you may call comfortably off, but we shall never be millionaires—we don't want to be! You see, ours is a profit-sharing factory. We don't know the meaning of a strike; and when you come over we shall be proud to show you our workers. Father was a working-man himself and he knows what they want. He always says, 'Give 'em a stake in the country if it's

John Bull : Socialist

only twelve feet square!’ Father believes in ownership whenever it’s possible. He says it makes a man stand upright.”

“Of course! of course!” said the Doctor, “it braces a man. That’s what Christopher Markham always said. I wonder, now, if you have come across him at any time?”

“Come across him, sir? I should just think we have. Why, he lives not far from my father; they are regular cronies; but strangely enough, it was only a few weeks ago that we found out he knew you. ‘Jim,’ he said to me, just before I came away, ‘don’t you dare show your damn perky face here again unless you bring the Doctor back with you. Haul him along; if need be, chloroform him—anything! but bring him here.’ Could you see your way to returning with me, sir? My father and I, we should be so pleased.”

“I am afraid I cannot do that, Smithson, much as I should like it. I still owe work to the Socialist State; but perhaps a little later, who knows?” said the Doctor, smiling.

“That’s it, sir! that’s it! I shall be here. When the time comes you’ll find me ready

John Bull : Socialist

and waiting. Father says he shan't rest in his grave unless he sees you safe out of—well, I won't tell you what father called the State, sir; his language is rather strong when he refers to Socialism. But you count on me. Out there we know what is going to happen before you do—you see we still have a Press*—I shall be here!"

"Ah," said the Doctor, as he made his way to the station the following morning, "now I can get along. How thankful I am for that little bit of money; I only wish all the other workers had it too. Perhaps I shall be able to take one or two of them with me; I must talk to Smithson."

"Good-bye," he said cheerfully, nodding to Comrade Sykes, who was sitting on a stone seat outside the Co-operative Home smoking a long pipe (no matter who went without, Comrade Sykes always had his pipe, and when questioned by the officials, he would slowly and carefully produce two soiled pieces

* Under Socialism the Press "will vanish from the scene."
See "Woman: Past, Present and Future," p. 222.

John Bull : Socialist

of paper, proving certain conditions of ownership which entitled him to "'is baccy reglar.")

"Good-bye, comrade," said the Doctor again, "I am going into the Pension House, and I want you to look after my friend John."

"Certingly," said Comrade Sykes, "but I ain't seen much o' John these last days; 'e do seem took up wi' summat."

"Of course," said the Doctor, smiling as he waved his hand in farewell, "John is married. He has been married for some time."

"Merried," said Comrade Sykes to himself; "well, I'm blowed! *Merried!* I might 'a knowed it were a wumman! . . . I can't abide the creeters!"

CHAPTER V

YES, John was "married," and for a time the whole world was changed, for he had found himself at last. The shy, reserved nature had blossomed under the careless touch of a hand which, had it been less careless, might never have held the key to John's nature—a nature occasionally met with in the "dark ages," whose emphasis lay in giving, not receiving.

The first time John saw Lizzie Anderson, one bright morning in early spring, she was returning from the factory with several of her comrades. The light, fresh wind had roughened her dark hair, and flushed her cheeks to a rosy bloom. She was chatting busily with her companions, when she suddenly caught sight of John. "'Ere," she said, as she passed him and noted his

John Bull: Socialist

steady gaze, "smell!" And she pressed a bunch of spring violets against his face. "Like to 'ave 'em," she said carelessly; and John, whose lips were sealed, held out an eager hand, and the scent of violets went with John to the end of his short life.

"Well! 'e be a dummy," said a comrade.

"Yes, I think I'll teach 'un to speak," said Lizzie, with a light toss of her head. "It'll be a change; most of 'em 'ave too much to say by 'alf."

So John learnt to speak; so much so, that even Lizzie's careless nature grew steadier in realizing the forces of a true emotional sympathy, and she began to look upon herself as luckier than many of her comrades. For the attitude between the man and the woman in the Socialist State was strangely at variance with its supposed teaching. In a country where each man was his own protector, mere brute force had acquired a prestige which threatened to degrade the entire community, for men

John Bull : Socialist

were in a position to assert their supremacy as in primitive times.

John was happy indeed. For the first time in his life the whole force of his nature expressed itself through the aura of joy, and his being expanded under a sense of freedom hitherto unknown. "I wonder," he said to himself, "if it will last," when suddenly a shock went through him. "Why! Liz could leave him if she wished—just when she liked; what could prevent her?" And the pall of servitude fell over John, the servitude of continually realising that a word here or a word there, and his happiness might have no future. For Lizzie's nature, bright though it was, under conditions which pleased her, became irritable and captious when facing a difficulty; and John felt that, with his own reserve and shyness, a difference might one day arise, when there would be no time to really express himself before Lizzie, in her quick impatience, had taken steps which would annul their relationship, and with the plea, "incompatible in temperament," would receive

John Bull: Socialist

from the State permission for "complete dissolution of the contract, with leave to enter into another marriage." *

A sense of helpless revolt came over John. He felt his love degraded through this ever-recurring fear. "He must be careful with Liz!" They parted last time in anger; and as, on the spur of a sudden anxiety, his memory raced back over the past twelve months of their affection, which went so smoothly, he tried to understand why Liz was suddenly so cold to him, and so anxious to pick a quarrel. "Why," he said to himself, "the last time she was with me I couldn't say a word to please her. I'll go round to the State Nurseries and see if she'll come for a walk this evening. I wonder!" and John's heart stood still, "I wonder if 'tis someone else. It can't be! It can't be!" he cried. "She seems to care for nothing but the child, she was so pleased," and John recalled the lilt in her voice as she said, "Why! the child's everything, John! Everything! You men be nothing to it. 'Tis *my* child."

* The Woman Socialist, p. 62.

John Bull: Socialist

"And mine too," said John softly.

"Ah, but you don't count," said Liz, with a touch of contempt in her voice; "the State do give the child to the mother."

"And what does the State do later?" said John, his face going suddenly white. "It takes—"

"Yes, but there's time yet," said Lizzie enigmatically, and she left him with a careless nod.

"I wonder what she meant," said John to himself; "I must find out, I can't go on like this," and during the dinner hour he went round to the State Nurseries and forced a reluctant consent from Lizzie that she would come out with him that evening.

And Lizzie kept her word. Indeed she was at the stile before John, who noted as he came up a forlornness in her aspect which quite unmanned him. "Why, Liz," he said, "you don't look happy. What's the matter?" And John looked at her with his heart in his eyes.

Lizzie turned her head away. "It's something I've got to tell you, John. I'm 'fraid you won't like it."

John Bull: Socialist

"Out with it, Liz," said John. "We'll soon put it straight. 'Tis easy to do it, when you are concerned."

Lizzie turned and looked at him with a soft maternal gaze such as John had often seen in her eyes when she looked at the child, and he inwardly shrank. His instinct told him that something final was going to happen.

"What is it, Liz?" he said hurriedly, "tell me at once."

"I—I—can't," said Liz, noting the stern expression in John's face.

"You must," said John, taking both her hands firmly. "Now, tell me."

"I won't tell 'ee," said Liz with sudden fear. "I won't tell 'ee a thing till 'ee let go my 'ands."

A lump came into John's throat. To think that fear should come between him and Liz; but he let go her hands, pulled himself together, and said kindly. "Now, Liz, I'm waiting—"

"Well," she said, "it's cos I do want—I do want—"

"Is there anyone else you care for Liz?"

John Bull : Socialist

said John quietly. "If so, I must know who it is."

"Anyone else I do care for!" exclaimed the girl with a light toss of her head, "any man, do 'ee mean? Why! I'm sick to death o' you men, allus a-follerin' and a-follerin'. I sometimes feels as if I did 'ate the whole lot of 'ee."

John stood looking at her with steady eyes fixed on her face. "Liz," he said, still quietly, "is it Bill White?"

Lizzie's face went suddenly crimson and her voice faltered. "I—I—wot do 'ee mean? Bill White!" she exclaimed hurriedly, 'tis a big lie to say as I do care for him. I do want—I do want—"

"What is it that you want, Liz?" said John, whose face was slowly getting whiter and whiter.

For answer the girl glanced quickly at him, and turning away her head, she broke into sudden convulsive sobs; but John took no heed. "Now, Liz," he said firmly.

"Well, if 'ee must know, I do want the child," she sobbed. "'Tis the child I do want

John Bull : Socialist

—I want 'un for always; and Bill White 'ee do say—”

“Bill White!” said John hoarsely. “What has he to do with my child?”

“Bill White 'ee do say,” sobbed Liz, “that he'll take me out o' the country with the child. 'E's got friends abroad, an' they've sent 'im money to get out, an' 'e says the child shall be mine, an' I'll allus 'ave 'un,” and Liz, after one pleading look at John, laid her head down on the stile and sobbed unrestrainedly.

“Liz,” said John hoarsely, “you'll never be so wicked!”

“Wicked!” sobbed Liz, “what do 'ee mean by wicked. The child be mine till it's six years old. The State do give the child to the mother,” and a defiant look came into her soft face.

“Liz,” said John sternly, “by all the laws of nature that child is as much mine as yours. Liz!” he said coming nearer, “*you shall not* take the child out of the country—I will prevent it.”

“How can 'ee,” she said with a frightened glance. “Bill White 'e's so . . .”

John Bull : Socialist

"Liz," said John who suddenly felt that from an emotional point of view he had turned into stone, "if I make this promise to you that, before the State can take the child, I will find means for us to leave the country, will you give me your word that you will have nothing more to do with Bill White?"

"How could 'ee do it, John?" said Lizzie eagerly, ignoring the latter part of John's question. "Could 'ee do it to once?"

"I could not do it at once, Liz; it would take time."

"Ah, but, John," said the girl beginning to sob again, "it mayn't never 'appen' an'—"

"Liz," said John, taking no notice of her frightened looks, "have I ever gone back on my word to you? Now, listen—I swear by my own life that I will get both you and the child out of the country before the State can lay hands on it. *I swear*," said John, gripping Lizzie's shoulders and looking sternly into her eyes.

"Well, John, I do believe 'ee! I do believe 'ee!" said Lizzie hastily. "Take yer 'ands off me *please*, they do 'urt."

John Bull : Socialist

John's hands fell suddenly to his sides. "Liz," he said coldly, "I think I'll stay here for a bit; you get back, you mustn't be out any longer. It's getting damp to your feet."

"Good-bye, John," said the girl timidly, gently touching his arm.

But John took no heed of Lizzie's farewell, nor did he turn his head to watch her out of sight. He sat on the stile for some little time longer, but at last, feeling cold and numb, he went slowly back to the Co-operative Home.

John's eyes were bent on the ground. That energy which comes from the lifting of the head he did not know. The stars above him shone, and blinked, and twinkled in the deep blue firmament, and seemed to be offering to the mortals beneath a divine companionship; but that "wondrous tale" told "nightly to the listening earth," left him untouched. John could not hear; he did not know how to listen.

As John was turning into the Co-operative Home, a sibilant whisper at his elbow pulled him up short. "John, me lad," said Comrade

John Bull : Socialist

Sykes, who was sitting on the stone seat smoking a pipe, "I got summat to say to 'ee. Don't make no noise, fishals is about. Them fools be all over the place o' nights."

"What is it?" said John. "I am very tired. Is it of importance?"

"Of wery great importance, me lad," urged Comrade Sykes. "Summat yer oughter know. Come wi' me inter the woods; I knows a place wot fishals don't, damn 'em. We might all be muggin' a red by the way them splits do foller us—come on!"

So John came on and followed Comrade Sykes. What did it matter where he went, or what he did?

"John, me lad," said Comrade Sykes when they had reached hiding distance, "I got summat to tell 'ee wot yer oughter know. That there young gal you be married to be playin' pranks an'—"

"Take care!" said John suddenly.

"Now, me lad," said his comrade, "don't 'ee be a fool, but listen steady; ther' ain't much time lef' an'—"

"Comrade Sykes," said John sternly, "if it's

John Bull : Socialist

about Liz I would rather not listen. I know you mean it kindly, but—”

“Now, John,” said Comrade Sykes, “ef you’re goin’ to be a fool I can’t save ’ee, there’s no savin’ a fool. We mus’ work together in this, or it’ll be too late. Wull ’ee listen?”

“What is it?” said John, startled into reason, for there was no mistaking Comrade Sykes’s manner. As he always said of himself: “W’en ’e meant a thing t’other soon knew, or t’other walked.”

“Well,” said Comrade Sykes, “I’ll tell ’ee, but try an’ be steady, me lad, for it ’ll ’urt ’ee. Las’ night I were a-standin’ on the edge o’ the wood, as it might be ’ere, an’ ’oo should I see comin’ along but your gal an’ that blarsted theivin’ bloke, Bill White—” (John gave a violent start) “Now, me lad, now,” said Comrade Sykes, “steady! Well, I bowled ’un to once, so I thumbs me pipe, so’s they shouldn’t see me, an’ I stands as still as a rat in ’idin’, an’ they cums close past, an’ Bill White ’e were a-sayin’—‘Now, Liz,’ ’e ses, ‘yer mus’ meet me day after to-morrow by six o’clock mornin’ express to catch the boat, an’

John Bull : Socialist

we'll get out o' this damn country, an' then yer can 'ave yer chile fer allus,' 'e ses. Liz, she broke out a-cryin' same as these creeters allus does—"I can't, I can't, Bill, cos o' John," she ses; but the end o' it were, she's to meet 'im to-morrer mornin' like 'e said she were to. Now, me lad, wot are yer going ter do?" said Comrade Sykes determinedly.

"Do," said John in a dazed way, "I can't take it in," he said. "Why, I saw Liz only this evening; she—"

"But yer got ter take it in, me lad! Yer mus' take it in to once. Ther's on'y a few 'ours lef' ter take it in," urged Comrade Sykes.

"But what can I do?" said John.

"Do? yer fool!" exclaimed Comrade Sykes, "*do?* w'y, stop 'em! Wot did I get yer 'ere fer, but fer that;" and going close up to John he hissed in his ear, "Chive 'un, yer young fool, chive 'un; stick a knife into 'un!"

"Why, so I could," said John, still in a dazed manner and going suddenly white.

Comrade Sykes for a moment looked anxious. His small keen eyes regarded John intently, but an emergency was only an oppor-

John Bull : Socialist

tunity to this veteran in prompt action. "'Ere, me lad," he said, "'ere, put this inside yer ;" and he whipped out of his pocket a small flat bottle, drew the cork with his few remaining teeth, and pressed the bottle to John's lips. "Swaller !" he said authoritatively, "swaller, that'll make a man of 'ee."

So John obeyed, and the end of it was that John's colour came back, and he began to feel his limbs again, and before he left Comrade Sykes he had sworn to himself that to-morrow's dawn should be the last for Bill White.

"An' that's the right end o' such cattle as 'e," said Comrade Sykes.

CHAPTER VI

THE next morning John was awakened, as it seemed to him, at a very early hour by a voice which kept repeating in his ear. "Wake up, John, wake up! git up! 'Tis time! wake up, me lad!" and he at last wrenched himself from the land of dreams to find Comrade Sykes bending over him and urging him to do something which his still slumbering brain refused to realize.

The scent of violets had been with John through his dreams, and some one with soft laughing face, and wind-roughened hair, had offered him bunch after bunch of the little purple flower; but as often as John held out his hands, the face would recede, the laughter die out, and a voice with a touch of contempt would say—"Ah, but you see, John, you don't count!"

John Bull: Socialist

As mental consciousness returned to John, his first feeling was surprise that he had slept at all, but as memory came back with repeated throbs all his forces were centered in the fact that Liz and the child were leaving him; that time was pressing him hard; that there was something he must do at once.

He rose mechanically and began to put on his clothes, but as he searched for the buttons his fingers fumbled. "What was the matter with his eyes? His sight seemed dim!"

"Mek 'aste," said Comrade Sykes in a hoarse whisper, "we be late. I got a bit of brekkus for 'ee out in the shed."

"I don't want any breakfast," said John. "I can't eat it."

"But yer wull eat it," said Comrade Sykes determinedly. "Why, yer got a matter o' zix mile or more to run. They be goin' from the village station. That damn bloke do know wot 'es about. 'E do know as comrades ain't out o' ther beds at this time o' day—they be a lazy lot. Cum on! Mek 'aste!"

Comrade Sykes had his own reasons for wishing John to eat some breakfast. By the

John Bull : Socialist

time John arrived in the shed, his tea had been "laced" to an extent which discredited Comrade Sykes' usual perspicacity, but John gulped it down with only a hazy feeling that there was something wrong with the taste. He refused all solid food, and turning to his comrade with a strained and eager expression he said sharply—

"Have you got it?"

"Yes, I got it all right" and Comrade Sykes produced from his capacious pocket a small parcel rolled in an old bandana handkerchief, which, being unfolded, disclosed a shining surgical knife. "Now, me lad," he said, "take 'eed to wot I do say," and putting his mouth close to John's ear he whispered hoarsely—

"Lef' shoulder blade ; strike down 'ards!"

And then these two men, one at the beginning of life, the other nearing the end, set off on their long tramp over the dusty roads and through the dew-bespangled grass with the intention of taking the life of a fellow-creature, who from childhood had been taught to realize that not until "material conditions become common property, free to all and

John Bull : Socialist

abundant for all," will "free play be given to man's higher faculties," nor will he "bend his thoughts on nobler things."*

As they trudged along, Comrade Sykes every now and again looked intently at John. Something stirred in the man's soul as he looked, for deep down in the heart of this rough comrade was a capacity for affection inherited from "dead and gone" ancestors, which the surroundings in a Socialist State had never called forth. A sense of fatherhood awoke in his heart at the sight of John's misery, and a swift hatred towards the author of this misery took possession of him, and for the time being gave a certain feeling of renewed vigour. "Cum on, lad," he said to John, "we be late."

John quickened his flagging steps and thrust his right hand more deeply into his pocket. "What was it he was clutching? Ah, of course, that was it. If he lost *that* he would never see Liz and the child again. . . . He was going to see Liz in a few minutes ;

* A New Catechism of Socialism, p. 44.

John Bull : Socialist

perhaps she would give him some violets. But her dark hair would be quite smooth ; it was always smooth in the mornings ; it was when the wind caught it—”

John faltered as he neared his destination. Once or twice he had tripped as they hurried along, and, as Comrade Sykes turned to him with an encouraging word, he noted that John's face was livid and a glazed look had come over his eyes. Comrade Sykes made a swift decision.

“John,” he said hoarsely, “you beant fit to do ut—give me the knife. Let *me* settle 'un.”

“No,” said John, “'tis mine to do that.”

“But yer beant fit, me lad ; yer 'ands be all of a tremble,” urged Comrade Sykes, and it suddenly came over him that in “looking after” John, he had been the means of placing him in a position of almost certain danger. Comrade Sykes, who remembered his own sturdy youth, had never given a thought to the possibility of failure on the part of John, and this sudden fear clutched at his heart, and for a few minutes rendered him dumb. “John, me lad,” he

John Bull : Socialist

pleaded at last, "it don't matter who do settle 'un s' long as— Give me the knife!"

"It does matter," said John breathing heavily, and Comrade Sykes, looking into his face, knew that further argument was useless.

For the remaining distance the two men swung along in silence, and the elder of them fought with the misery of his self-condemnation as best he could. Two salt tears, the first he had shed since early childhood, trickled down his withered cheeks; but he brushed them hastily away, and as they turned a corner, he laid a firm hand upon John's arm: "Now, lad," he said, "I ax' 'ee fer the las' time—wull 'ee let me do 'ut?"

"No," said John.

"Then, lad, 'ee mus' take this; it'll put life into 'ee," and for the third time within a few hours John was dosed with a medicine, which the Doctor had warned him he was never to touch.

As they entered the little village station, so strange and still in the early morning hours, they caught sight of the broad back of Comrade

John Bull : Socialist

Bill White. John gave a violent start, but he was ready. A faint red suddenly streaked his cheek, and a stealthy look came into his eyes. "*Now, lad, now!*" said Comrade Sykes in a hoarse whisper, "strike down'ards;" and John creeping quietly up gave a final spring, and to the sound of a woman's shrill scream brought down his arm, and—

John struck wide, and the next moment a heavy fist came crashing under his chin and he fell in a heap on the platform.

"'Ow do 'ee feel now, me lad?" said the anxious voice of Comrade Sykes as John gradually returned to consciousness. "Can 'ee sit up?"

"What's this on my head?" said John, pulling at an old bandana handkerchief which had been soaked in water and swathed round his forehead.

"It's on'y my old 'ankercher," said Comrade Sykes; "don't 'ee pull at it, me lad—it's ter keep yer 'ead cool."

One of the station officials was standing looking down on John. "How did this

John Bull : Socialist

happen?" he said. "What does it mean? You had better go for a doctor. Has he been fighting?"

"It means more than you'll ever be tole," said Comrade Sykes, who always made short work of the officials, "and I ain't agoin' for no doctors, I can manage 'un meself."

The nerve of this determined comrade had come back. For a few agonized moments he thought John was killed, and as his keen old eyes followed the swiftly moving train, which contained John's murderer, curses loud and deep were hurled after it—curses such as were easily understood by the Socialist official, as the ills prayed for were entirely material, but were of so appalling a nature as to draw from that shocked and rather youthful comrade an ill-timed expostulation.

"Well! well!" said the official, "I never heard such language in my life. Really, comrade, you—"

"Young man," said Comrade Sykes sternly, "give us none o' your lip or—" and he shook a still formidable fist within an inch of the official's face before turning away to John,

John Bull : Socialist

"I should like this handkerchief off," said John faintly, "I can't see properly."

"It aint over yer eyes, lad," said his comrade anxiously, as he helped John into a sitting posture. "Keep it on a bit longer, it'll cool yer 'ead. You'll soon be all right. We must get 'ee back to the spike," which was Comrade Sykes name for all Co-operative Homes.

"No," said John, "I can't go there."

"I'll tell 'ee wot," said his comrade after a few moments busy thinkin, "I'll take 'ee back to the 'ole shed. I got the key o' the door and 'ee can stay there as long as 'ee do please. I'll look after 'ee."

"But I must get back to work," said John. "The workers will be expecting me."

"Yer wunt do that, me lad, not if I 'as ter fight th' hull lot o' them, an' 'fishals likewise. Let me 'elp 'ee on to the seat, whiles I go an' see ef I can get 'ee a cart to take 'ee along."

"The farm carts go into the town at this time," said John.

"Why, so 'em do ; I'll get 'ee a seat in one o' them," and Comrade Sykes, after some sharp and skilful bargaining with a worker as to the

John Bull : Socialist

amount of tabacco he would receive at the end of the journey, secured a seat for John in one of the farm carts, ordered the worker to "go slow," and patiently trotted after it until they were within easy distance of the Co-operative Home. "Best go no furthers," said Comrade Sykes, "'fishals is about."

John was so refreshed by the cool morning air that, with the help of his comrade he was able to get to the shed, and sank down with a feeling of relief on the soft bed of straw, which was quickly made for him. "There, me lad, I'll get 'ee a rug ter-night and furthers on 'ee shall 'ave a strong cup o' cawfee, that is, ef 'ee wunt take no more of—."

"No," said John firmly. "But how will you get the coffee; we've had no coffee for a long time?"

"Yer axes no questions an' yer'll be tole no lies, me lad," said Comrade Sykes, with a slow wink, and John smiled faintly as the door closed upon him.

The face of Comrade Sykes drew itself into innumerable puckers, and a sternly thinking expression took possession of his eyes as he

John Bull : Socialist

turned towards the Co-operative Home. As he went along, he took out of his pocket, (first ascertaining that no one was about) a fat pouch of tobacco and cogitated over the contents. "No," he said, "I wunt risk it, it be all I got," and he went and sat on the stone seat known to the workers as "Sykes' little lot," and placed an empty pipe between his teeth. "I wunders," he said to himself, "ef I shall 'ave 'enough baccy to do ut—I hopes to Gawd I shall.

At dinner that day there was an outcry among the workers as to the whereabouts of Comrade John Bull. "Whose a-goin' to do his work?" said one. "I know I ain't; and that field must be reaped afore we finishes work to-day, or there ain't to be no 'arvest supper. The whole of John's lot is still standing. Why don't he come and do his work same as rest of us; just let me catch 'un, that's all!"

"I won't do his work neither," said another comrade. "Nor me! nor me!" went round the table; but Comrade Sykes took no notice. He had his hand on his tobacco pouch, and

John Bull : Socialist

sat placidly eating the first instalment of his dinner—such as it was—until a pudding was placed on the table. “Well, I’m blowed! old crusteses soak over agin,” was his comment.

“Do you know where Comrade John Bull is?” said one of the officials coming up. “The executive tells me he has not been at work to-day. What has become of him?”

“John beant well,” said Comrade Sykes laconically, going on with his dinner.

“Not well,” said the official; “what is the matter with him? He had better see a doctor at once; his work is waiting.”

“John don’t need no doctors,” said Comrade Sykes.

“Do you know where he is?” said the official.

“Yes, I knows.”

“Well, where is he?”

“I wunt tell ’ee.”

“Now, my good comrade,” said the official, “this is sheer nonsense. John’s work is waiting and—”

“It may wait fer everlastin’ s’ far as it do consarn John,” said Comrade Sykes. “No!

John Bull : Socialist

none o' that there pudden, thank 'ee," he said in a tone of deep disgust, as a plate was put before him. "Tek' the stuff away; I ha' done!" and rising from the table, he was leaving the room when the official called after him: "If you see John, comrade, remind him of the rule of the State—no work, no dinner."

"I reckon John can do wi'out 'is denner," said Comrade Sykes; "'e's off 'is feed!" and he was making for his usual seat outside, when a thought seemed to strike him and he turned back.

Comrade Sykes had a strong sense of justice, even to the extent of allowing, that the "iron bars" resulting from a night's work far back in the "dark ages" did "sarve 'un right, fer t'wer the law o' the land, an' 'e knowed it;" and he now felt that, as it was through him that John's work would be lost to the State, 'twas only right and proper that he should step in and provide a substitute at his own cost.

"'Fishal," he said, "give 'eed ter me fer a minit. T'aint fair, but I do tell 'ee, as t'were me as got John inter trubble; 'e aint no ways

John Bull: Socialist

ter blame, so 'tis fer me to find summun ter do 'is work, an'—"

"But I don't think you can," said the official anxiously. "The workers have all refused, and we can't make them."

"Leave it ter me," said Comrade Sykes oracularly; "I'm 'ere ter answer for John's work." And he turned and went quickly out of the door and down the road until he came to a gate, through which all the workers would pass to their work.

He eyed each worker keenly as he went by, and had an answer for every gibe and greeting that was thrown at him; but he finally took one of them by the sleeve and said: "'Ere, I do want 'ee."

"What do yer want?" said the worker. "We be late."

"Not so late but wot yer can be later," said Comrade Sykes. "Now, look 'ee 'ere! Wull 'ee do John's work for two free days, or wunt 'ee?"

"John's lost his gal, 'avent 'e?" said the worker.

"'E 'ave."

John Bull: Socialist

"Why don't the fool get another? There's plenty of 'em about."

"John beant that sort," said Comrade Sykes; "e beant a wild hanimal."

"Lord! 'tis the only way in this cursed country," said the worker.

"Now, will 'ee or wunt 'ee?" said Comrade Sykes.

The worker considered for a moment. "What ter git?" he said.

"Yer shall 'ave a munth's 'baccy."

"Give us a squint of it, then," and the worker got a squint, with the result that the promise was given and kept.

Comrade Sykes went back to the stone seat with a sense of forlornness. He took out his empty pipe, looked earnestly into the bowl, stirred the few remaining ashes with his fingers, and finally put it between his teeth. This rough comrade was no poet, but his attitude towards tobacco was very much the same as a quaint singer of past times, "For thy sake, Tobacco, I Would do anything but die," and a month's loss of the fragrant plant was the strongest proof he had ever given of his sense

John Bull : Socialist

of "equality." For this astute comrade knew where he could get, at any given moment, plenty more of the Indian weed ; but that was not within his code of honour. A cottage and ten shillings a week would not include a double allowance of tobacco. This had been finally reckoned out long ago, and he was not the man to go back on his decisions. "It don't do to think about it," he said. "I'll go and see John ; 'tis time 'e 'ad summat to eat."

Two days later, when Comrade Sykes opened the door of the shed to call John, who was now well enough to take up his work, the place was empty. "John be gone along, then, I s'pose. The lad must be feelin' all right," he said, when his eyes suddenly lighted on a piece of paper pinned to the wall. "I can't face the workers," John had written. "I am going to see Comrade Dr. Bryce. I shall tramp it."

"Well, I'm blowed ! Wot do the lad mean? Wy, 'tis vorty mile or more. Poor lad ! p'raps the sea air'll do 'un good," and Comrade Sykes, with a gusty sigh, tore the paper into little bits, put the key of the shed in his pocket, and

John Bull : Socialist

when questioned later by the officials and workers as to John's whereabouts, presented so natural an appearance of concerned surprise as to arouse the keenest suspicion in the mind of the executive.

"Comrade Sykes kens where John is, of that I am cerrytain," he said to one of the officials. "He has offered to do John's worrk for the next twa days. The lazy loun kens naething about worrk, but it is the best we can dae."

CHAPTER VII

JOHN trudged heavily along the hot, dusty roads, every now and again turning aside to seek some shelter under the wilting hedges. It was high noon, and the sun's rays beat down upon his head with a sickening effect, and the glare from the road so hurt his eyes that he was compelled to cease walking and look round for some hiding-place where he might rest, out of sight of any of the workers. John had taken the precaution to put some food in his pocket, for the end he had in view was to reach Dr. Bryce. He had a hazy feeling that if he could do this, things would straighten themselves out—he might even get Liz and the child back. Perhaps the Doctor would lend him some money to pay his passage out. Comrade Sykes knew where they were gone; he had found that out; and John felt sure that

John Bull : Socialist

if he could meet Bill White on fair ground—that is, when he himself had none of that burning stuff in his veins—Bill wouldn't have a chance. . . . He should never cease to think of Liz and the child, and John rocked to and fro as a vision of them came before him. Soon his brain began to work busily, and he tried to follow out an argument which would justify Lizzie's statement that the child belonged to her—he did not count. “How can that be?” thought John. “It's not anyone else's child; a child must have a father, therefore it is my child—mine and her's;” and this argument went round and round in his brain like a squirrel in a cage. At moments, hard thoughts surged up in his heart towards Liz. It was through her that he was suffering like this. He felt as if he hated her, and a sudden feeling came over him that he might get to work again and forget all about her; and with this unexpected stimulus he made an effort to throw off his load of care, got up swiftly, and swung along the roads in the freshening breeze. For the evening had begun; the last rays of the setting sun tinged everything with a rosy

John Bull : Socialist

glow, and John, drawing deep breaths of the cooling air, felt sure that he hated Liz. He would forget her!

But John was young and without experience. By the time the stars were glinting in the deep blue sky, his grief had come back—fiercely, remorselessly; it shook him roughly by the throat; it contracted his heart, and that mystery in nature—the great love of one human being for another, held him in thrall. “I can’t bear it—I can’t bear it!” he cried, and turning aside into a field, he flung himself face downwards on the grass, and hard sobs shook him from head to foot.

The next evening as Comrade Bryce was sitting in his room endeavouring to read by the light of an ill-tended lamp (a strike had “occurred” among the gas-workers, as their scale of living had been necessarily lowered), an official abruptly opened the door, thrust in his head, and said shortly: “There’s a worker to see you downstairs, comrade—he looks ill.”

“Who is it?” said the Doctor. “Why does he not go to the hospital? but wait, I’ll go

John Bull : Socialist

down ;” for the Doctor never turned a deaf ear to any call upon him for relief.

He was not altogether surprised to see John. The lad had been in his thoughts the greater part of the day, for he had only that morning received an ill-written but characteristic letter from Comrade Sykes. “Honored sir,” it began, “i be writin’ to tell ’ee as jon bull ’ave lost ’is gal an the little ’un—she ’ave gone out of this dam country wi’ that blarsted thievin’ bloke bill wite ; they are to be merried soon as they do land—jon’s best quit of ’er but ’e don’t know it, e’ be a-sorrowin’ bad. Willum Sykes.

“Why, John, dear lad,” said the Doctor as he noted the white and exhausted face, “what is the matter? What brings you here?”

“I—I—can’t—I can’t—” struggled John groping with his hands.

The Doctor’s professional eye saw at a glance what was the matter, and he put a firm, but kindly hand on John’s shoulder. “Don’t try to speak, John,” he said, “you will soon be better ; you are over-fatigued. I expect you have been tramping it.”

John nodded.

John Bull : Socialist

“Ah, I thought so ;” said the Doctor, “that is why your eyes are troubling you. Rest will put it all right,” he said encouragingly. “Now I will go and get you some medicine, and then you shall come up into my room ; it is only a short flight of stairs. Heinrich ?” called the Doctor as he went up to his room. “I want you ; John is here.”

“I haf seen him,” said Heinrich, “von minute ago. He do not speak.”

“No,” said the Doctor, “but he will speak soon. That is only exhaustion ; he will get all right—he needs rest. Now, John must have somewhere to sleep, and I want you to bring your mattress and pillow into my room for him. You won’t mind sleeping on the floor to-night ?”

“Nein ! nein ! I care not if it be many nights,” said Heinrich, and he went away to do the Doctor’s bidding.

John was so much better for the medicine, which left no “burning” feeling in his veins, that he required no assistance to reach the Doctor’s room, and was soon able to take some food, which he felt put new life into him.

John Bull : Socialist

"Now, John," said the Doctor, "before we begin talking I want you to get some sleep," and John obediently lay down upon the mattress, and before the clock on the mantel-piece had ticked out many minutes, to the Doctor's great relief, he was sleeping soundly.

"Poor lad!" said Comrade Bryce, as he noted the drawn and grief-worn face, "I wonder how I shall be able to make him understand that Liz and the child are lost to him. He is young yet, but the inevitable is so difficult to the young; I shall have to try and turn his thoughts. But the Doctor was old enough and wise enough to know that, with a nature like John's, he might as well try to turn the stars in their course. Time, which wears off the sharp edges of all feeling, was the only friend for John; but alas! he did not know this.

John slept soundly for nearly two hours, and awoke to find the Doctor bending over him with a cup of steaming coffee in his hands. "How good this is!" said John as he sat up and drank it. "Comrade Sykes gave me a cup of coffee a day or two ago."

John Bull : Socialist

"Did he?" said the Doctor, with a twinkle in his eye. "I wonder where he got it. He is a remarkable person."

"I think I can get up now," said John, "I feel quite strong again, and I have something to ask you—if you don't mind my talking."

"Certainly not ; talk as much as you please ; but there is plenty of time. Don't you think we had better wait until to-morrow."

"No," said John, "I can't wait," and he pulled himself together and spoke quietly and at first without apparent effort.—

"Sir," he said, "Liz and the child have left me ; they have gone out of the country. She has gone—gone—with—"

"Yes, John," said the Doctor kindly, "I know all about it. Comrade Sykes wrote and told me ; I got the letter this morning. I was not surprised to see you."

"Sir," said John (John often called the Doctor "sir," like many of the other comrades), "perhaps Comrade Sykes didn't tell you that I tried to kill Bill White. I tried—and failed ; but next time I shall not fail. I want to go after them, and get Liz and

John Bull : Socialist

the child back. Could you—do you think you could lend me my passage money? I would return it later. I could work out there, and—”

“John!” said the Doctor suddenly, and the kindly look went out of his eyes, and his face fell into stern lines, “John, do you realise what you are saying? You are asking me to aid you in taking the life of a fellow creature!”

“You mean killing Bill White?” said John. “Yes, that is what I intend to do. I want to get Liz and the child back.”

“But, John,” urged the Doctor, “by what right do you take the life of your comrade?”

“By what right did he take my life?” said John. “Liz and the child are my life.”

“That is not the same thing,” said the Doctor, sternly, “and you know it. With you there is the chance, the hope, the almost certainty of recovery. With him there would be no recovery.”

“If I thought there could be,” said John, “I would kill him twice over.”

John Bull : Socialist

The Doctor was shocked. Things had gone farther than he had anticipated. John was talking quietly, without any trace of excitement, and his brain was clear and working in sequence; so the Doctor felt the only thing he could do was to try further argument.

"John," he said, "you must remember that Bill White was only within his rights as a Socialist citizen. The State had no power to prevent his leaving the country if he had the means to do so. They had no power to prevent him from taking Liz. You must remember that under Socialist rule the woman is "free as the wind"* in the matter of leaving one man for another. The fact that Liz did not wait to get 'the consent of the community' for the dissolution of her contract with you is of no moment, as it will not interfere with her own future in another country. She probably acted in this manner to avoid conflict with you; and you know," he said, "it leaves you free to marry someone else."

* The Woman Socialist, p. 61.

John Bull : Socialist

"I can never be free," said John; "my life is bound up in Liz and the child."

"Yes," said the Doctor, "but you must realize Lizzie's view of the matter. It was evidently not her wish to stay with you, or she would have done so."

"No," said John hoarsely, "it was not that. I know it! It was the child she wanted. She wanted to have it always, and to bring it up in her own way. It was her child and mine."

"Yes; but you see, John, the Socialist State does not recognise the right of the father—the right to protect and care for his child. He is not needed in the matter. The mother's living is 'assured to her by the community,' and she is 'salaried according to the number and healthiness of her offspring.'* You knew all this when you married Liz. I did not let you grow up in ignorance of your position as a Socialist citizen."

"Yes, I knew it—in a way," said John,

* The Woman Socialist, p. 59.

John Bull : Socialist

“but—but— Sir! could you lend me the money? I will pay it back.”

“John,” said the Doctor gravely, for he knew the time had come when John must learn the hopelessness of his position, “you must listen to me and take in what I say. Even if you could go out and manage to find them—which I very much doubt—Lizzie would have been legally married to Bill White for some little time. She would have got to care for him. I know him—he is not a bad man, and, as you know, he always cared for Liz, and—”

“But Liz cared for me!” cried John hoarsely : “I know that she did.”

“Of course,” said the Doctor, “and she would have continued to care for you if things had been different; she—” The Doctor hesitated, but felt he must go on; it seemed the only way. “She may find it difficult at first to transfer her affection, *but she will do it*, and she will be a good mother to your child.”

“Sir,” said John, clenching his hands, and beginning to breathe heavily, “let me go after him!”

John Bull: Socialist

"No," said the Doctor sternly, "he does not deserve it. He is one of many; he has been trained in a Socialist State, and as time goes on you will see this too. . . . Remember," he said less sternly, "you are young, you have life before you; no one knows what may happen, and—"

"But I can't—I can't."

"Well, John," said the Doctor patiently.

"I can't face the workers," said John hurriedly.

"No, I will see to that; you shall stay here with me for a time. Heinrich is getting old; there is plenty for you to do, and I shall be glad to have you, for my own sake," said the Doctor. "I am sometimes very lonely, and . . . I too begin to get old."

"But will the State let me," said John eagerly. Somehow his trouble seemed to lessen when he was with Comrade Bryce. He felt he could almost bear it.

"The State will do as I wish," said the Doctor. "I can appeal to the Medical Faculty; and now, dear lad, let us get to rest, we both need it," and the Doctor's drawn face relaxed,

John Bull : Socialist

and an involuntary sigh of relief escaped him. He felt that for the time being, at any rate, John was safe ; and to-morrow the arguments could be begun all over again, and perhaps some new ones might be forthcoming, and as time went on, that most potent argument of all would present itself—a new face, new surroundings.

John took off his coat and threw himself down on to the mattress, but he could not sleep. His eyes moved restlessly about, and as in the bright moonlight he caught sight of the lined and emaciated face of the Doctor, so quiet in sleep, a feeling of deep gratitude and affection surged up in his heart towards this best and kindest of comrades. For the moment he forgot his own trouble, and as his mind went back over the past he realized the care and training that had been given him. "What would my life have been but for him," thought John. "I should have quarrelled and fought like the rest of them," and he smiled as he remembered the sharp correction given him by the Doctor when in a fit of childish rage he had bitten the hand of Comrade

John Bull : Socialist

Elizabeth. "Ah," he said to himself, I owe him everything—everything, I must try and . . . I shall never go to sleep," thought John just he was beginning to doze. Suddenly he was wide awake. "What was that? what was that? Someone had called him! It was Liz, surely it was Liz The scent of violets came over him, and the old pain gripped him and held him fast. John shut his teeth and tried to lie still, but it was no use. He turned restlessly from side to side, so at last he got up quietly and went and sat by the open window. "What does it mean?" he cried to himself. "Why should I suffer like this?" His head began to throb heavily, and he felt he should never rest again . . . *never* . . . *never*. How could he? It was useless to try."

John put his elbows on the window-sill and gazed out on the scene before him. The almost silent sea was shining and glimmering under the clear light of the moon ; the waves were softly lapping the shore, and a sense of deep peace pervaded the whole atmosphere. As John gazed, the words of a hymn came back to him—a hymn that Comrade Elizabeth used to sing,

John Bull : Socialist

when, as a little child, he could not sleep for the pain in his eyes : “ Oh, where shall rest be found ? ”

“ *Why, it's there!* ” cried John, and without a moment's hesitation he slipped over the window-sill, dropped lightly to the ground, and ran down the path that led to the sea.

Some little time later the Doctor suddenly awoke with a sense of oppression. A cloud had come over the moon ; the room was in darkness ; he could not see. “ John,” he cried anxiously, “ are you awake ? John ! do you hear ? . . . Why, how soundly he sleeps,” said the Doctor, as he sank back to rest. .

CHAPTER VIII

JOHN BULL'S body was washed ashore one rough and stormy morning a few days later, and was duly cremated according to the Socialist rule. There were no rites connected with this ceremony as "religion had disappeared" from the "new community" "by itself and without any violent attack,"* and had given place to the conviction that "death means the cessation of existence ;" but as a concession to the Doctor, who was known to hold curious beliefs, John's ashes were gathered up, placed in a small urn, and presented by two of the officials to Comrade Bryce.

The Doctor smiled faintly as they made him this offering. "Thank you," he said, "it is very kind of you to think of this, but it means nothing to me. John is not there. Take it away and bury it in the usual manner."

"How queer the Doctor do talk," said the

* Woman : Past, Present and Future, p. 213

John Bull : Socialist

executive of the kitchen, Comrade Amelia Ann, to the senior official. "I s'pose he thinks that John was something more than his body. I've heard tell that people once believed there was something in us that lived over again somewhere else. It do seem queer!"

"Yes," said the senior official, who was fond of "instructing" his comrades in order that the Socialist "equality" principle might be more disseminated; (in this way he had acquired a reputation for superior learning, which ill became him as a Socialist citizen). "Yes, you see, Comrade Bryce still holds certain beliefs of the 'dark ages.' In those days these beliefs were clung to by 'the ruling classes as a means of upholding their supremacy.'* It was called 'Religion,' and it would take me a long time to explain it to you; but it was founded on the belief that the body was not the only part of the human being, that there was something else.—I think they called it the 'soul,' which could not become extinct as the body does. I really wonder that so intelligent a man as the Doctor

* Woman : Past, Present, and Future, p. 214

John Bull : Socialist

can continue to believe in these myths. Now that there are no ruling classes such belief is no longer necessary, and from the 'enlightened' Socialist point of view is reduced to a mere 'Fetishism.' ”

The kitchen executive listened with dish-cloth in hand (the Pension House could not afford other than “human machines” for washing its plates), and, while marvelling at the learning of the senior official, she privately determined to question the Doctor as to the existence of “the soul.” John’s life was so short; what was the good of being born at all? But if—if—. “I wonder,” she sighed, as she began preparations for cooking the dinner of the ninety-nine inmates—

“I can’t abide them old men and women comrades,” she said impatiently. “Why didn’t one of ’em die instead of John?”

When the Doctor awoke on the morning following his conversation with John and found him gone, it did not enter his mind that there was any need for anxiety; but as the days passed without any word from the lad, a sharp, penetrating fear took possession of him, and he

John Bull: Socialist

was in some way prepared for the news which was brought to him by one of the officials.

"I can't think what was the matter with Comrade John Bull," said the official, "that he should take his life—and so young, too. I understand that he was not overworked. He was a Majority citizen, and had enough food and drink. Do you know why he did it, comrade? It has been quite a shock to us all."

"Yes," said the Doctor, in a tone of intense weariness, "but it is useless explaining; you would not realise the position. And now, if you please, I should like to be alone," and as the official closed the door behind him, the Doctor quietly turned the key.

Comrade Bryce threw himself into a chair and buried his face in his hands. A bitterness such as he had never before experienced surged up in his heart, and a sense of injustice came over him so keen as to almost paralyse thought. "John! Where is John?" he kept repeating to himself, and this beat in upon his brain until the pressure became so great that he got up and went over and stood by the open window, and the rough salt wind from

John Bull: Socialist

the stormy sea blew in upon his face. "It is in moments such as these," he thought, "that we stand or fall," and although the Doctor felt that with that instinct of faith—which in him was cleared and strengthened through his intelligence—his courage would not fail him, yet he knew that faith held more for him than this. . . . "*I will not conquer comfortless!*" he cried; and in that darkest hour faith served him still.

Some months later the Doctor was again looking through his papers preparatory to leaving the country. A few days before he had received a letter from his American friend announcing his arrival in the following week—"It has come sooner than even we expected," said the letter, "and my father is rejoicing at your near advent. As I write, he and his crony, Mr. Christopher Markham, are quarrelling as to their respective rights in your friendship. In their arguments I never know which to back, for they both seem to win. My father says it is because his crony is an old Socialist still."

This coming end to the Socialist State

John Bull : Socialist

suggested in his friend's letter was no surprise to the Doctor. The Medical Faculty, whose power and influence in the community almost exceeded that of the Government, had long been aware of an impending foreign invasion, and were wont to speak of it amongst themselves as more to be desired than a continuance of existing rule. This attitude, detected by the officials, aroused the keenest suspicion in the minds of the Socialist leaders ; but, although the reins of Government had now been drawn so tightly as to leave very little semblance of the original Socialist teaching, it was helpless before this body of men who held the lives of the community in their hands. At one time the Socialist leaders, in their endeavour to combat this influence, had quietly introduced into the country "foreign" Socialists, who had been trained in Medical Schools abroad, and who could be counted upon to vote for the Government and to uphold its interests. This action, however, had been quickly detected by the Medical Faculty, and the lives of these imported citizens were rendered so miserable that they gladly, at the instigation and with

John Bull : Socialist

the pecuniary help of their more formidable comrades, returned to their own countries.

"The Government will not try that dodge again," the President of the Medical Faculty had said to Dr. Bryce; "it was a blunder. They forgot that the man whose business it is to look for symptoms can usually find them. As you know, we easily detected these spies of the Government. There are still a few amongst us—two of them were at our last council meeting."

"Really," said the Doctor. "Who were they?"

"Comrade Hans Hartmann sitting to my left, and that short, dark man, Comrade Giovanni, at the end of the room. These are the two men who informed the Socialist leaders that many of the workers are in communication with Governments abroad."

"Yes, that is quite true," said the Doctor. "I am always warning Heinrich, but he manages to escape detection. I suppose," he continued, "you will leave the country when it ceases to be a Socialist State?"

"Well, that depends upon the coming rule," said the President. "You see, this invasion

John Bull : Socialist

must be almost a walk over. A country divided against itself, as this country is, cannot withstand any determined attack. The Minority—and you know how large the Minority now is—will lay down their arms. That is our direction to them; there will probably be very little bloodshed.”

“Ah, I am thankful to hear that,” said the Doctor. “I feared—”

“As for you, my dear fellow,” said the President, who knew that the Doctor’s days were numbered, “get out of the country as quickly as you can, and try and get a complete rest. I believe you have friends abroad, and—well, if you need a little money . . . you see I have had no relatives to keep—and—”

“Thank you,” said the Doctor, “that is most kind of you, but you will laugh when you hear that I am a capitalist. Many years ago I lent some money to a friend. I had forgotten all about it until one day a ‘blessing’ came home to roost. I am most thankful; for it will enable me to finish my book, ‘The Position of Heredity in the Treatment of Disease.’”

“Which I hope you will dedicate to the Socialist State,” said the President.

John Bull : Socialist

* * * * *

* * * * *

“Heinrich,” said the Doctor to his comrade, who was seated by the window engaged in his usual occupation of scanning the horizon with the Doctor’s field-glasses, “have you thought over what I said to you? Are you prepared to leave the country with me? Remember, it may be your only chance.”

“Nein, nein, do not ask me,” said Heinrich. “I haf to remain ; I wish to remain. I await mine vriends,” but he brushed away a tear as he spoke, for he loved the Doctor.

Just then an official abruptly opened the door and threw down on the table two letters with foreign post-marks. His face was white and scared, and he said hastily to the Doctor,

“I have to inform you, comrade, that the Socialist leaders have decided that, in the future, no letters with foreign post-marks will be received without going through their hands.”

“Indeed!” said the Doctor, “I have heard nothing of this. When is it to be put to the vote? The Government will have the entire

John Bull: Socialist

Medical Faculty against it. We shall work up a majority vote."

"It is not to be put to the vote," said the official shortly, "there is no time."

"Not to be put to the vote," exclaimed the Doctor; "but that is the Socialist rule."

"Yes, but I have told you," said the official impatiently, "there is no time. A proclamation is to be issued."

"Really? How will the Government enforce it?" said the Doctor quietly.

A loud guffaw from Heinrich prevented the official's answer from being heard, and he went angrily away.

The following morning the Doctor, having finally strapped his portmanteau, was burning a few papers—amongst which was an old envelope containing a faded bunch of violets which had been found in the pocket of John's coat—when he was startled by a loud exclamation from Heinrich, who was seated at the window.

"Mein Gott!" he cried, "I haf lived to see the day—'TIS HE! 'TIS HE!"

"Thank God!" murmured the Doctor.

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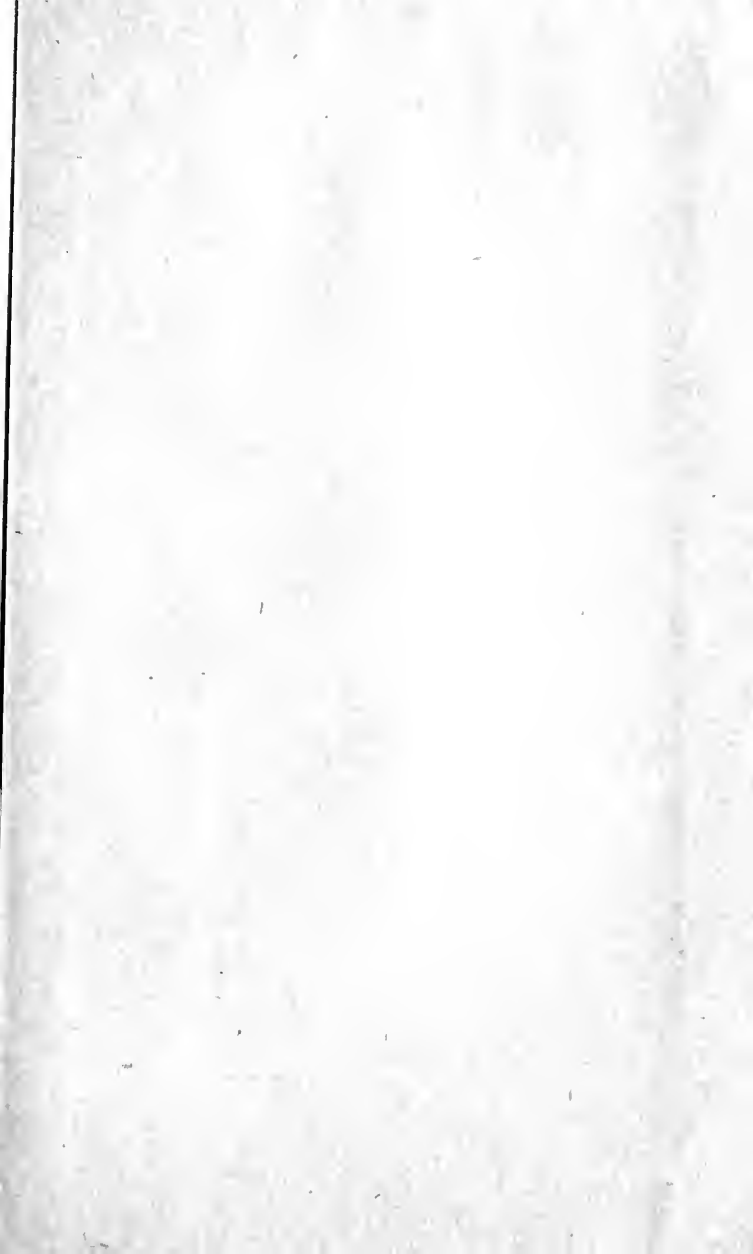
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